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THE TRAINING OF THE CHURCH

S. S. LAPPIN

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THE TRAINING OF THE CHURCH

BY S. S. LAPPIN

A SERIES OF THIRTY-FIVE LESSONS DESIGNED TO AID THOSE WHO WOULD KNOW MORE, DO MORE AND BE MORE IN THE SERVICE OF JESUS CHRIST

THE STANDARD PUBLISHING COMPANY
CINCINNATI, O.

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

Christianity is the greatest treasure of our race. But it is being misrepresented by its friends. The church should be a radiant army of crusaders carrying a glad message and a ready service to all the untaught and destitute. The world is waiting for the conquest; the means, the men and the message are all at hand. Why does not the work go forward at a faster rate? The plain fact is, we have not gripped the facts of our faith, nor let them grip us very firmly as yet. Many churches are but nominally Christian, and many church-members are in no sense "disciples"—learners—in the school of Christ.

This little hand-book has been prepared for use by those who see the situation as it is, who feel the distress of it, and who are seeking a remedy for it. The title, "The Training of the Church," suggests precisely what the author and publishers desire it to assist in doing.

It is hoped that whole churches, under direction of competent leaders and teachers, will take up these studies together. It will not be enough for the preacher to discourse upon the topics treated, though this will be a helpful accompaniment of the course. These matters must be studied by the people for themselves, and so studied as to be retained in their minds as a part of the intellectual and spiritual possession of the individual. The whole church needs it. It is as important that the people know their duties and obligations as that those chosen to serve in special capacity know theirs.

There are thirty-five lessons in the course—enough for about nine months' study. Classes should meet once a week. Drills should be frequent. Public recognition services should be held when the course has been completed, and certificates granted to all who have done creditable work in the class.

The author acknowledges his indebtedness to many men and many books. All he has here presented came from others, and, with gratitude to God for the fellowship in study and service he is permitted to enjoy, he passes this bit of work along, claiming only the arrangement as his own.

S. S. Lappin.

Cincinnati, O.

THE TRAINING OF THE CHURCH

PART I.

FIVE LESSONS ON THE SCRIPTURES

Lesson I. The Bible—What It Is.
Lesson II. The Bible—What It Contains.
Lesson III. The Man in the Book.
Lesson IV. The Man and the Book.
Lesson V. The Book in the World.

LESSON I. THE BIBLE—WHAT IT IS

The Bible is a collection of writings more or less ancient. It is regarded as sacred by many millions of the earth's most enlightened inhabitants. The tracts or pamphlets of which the Book is made up are from persons of every station of life and of every degree of culture. They touch life at every point—cheer for the discouraged, hope for the downtrodden, comfort for the sorrowing, succor for the tempted, promises of blessing for the poor, admonition for the rich, ideals for the righteous, condemnation for the wicked and examples for us all.

The marvel of the Book is that, though it is the work of many minds, working in lands widely separated and at times remote from each other, the work, as a whole, is symmetrical and complete. Book answers to book, part harmonizes with part, so that no careful reader can escape the impression that one mind runs through it all.

This collection of ancient manuscripts has won for itself the name Bible, or "The Book." It is no ordinary volume that, in a world full of books, is able to hold first place through centuries of intellectual progress. Its claims are worthy of consideration.

I. The Bible is a History. As a story, it is continuous, and not disconnected or difficult of comprehension, as might be expected of

such a collection of records. He who reads for the story alone will find it sustained and interesting, with all that is needed in the way of movement and climax.

1. *It is a history of creation.* Far the larger part of the time covered by the Biblical record is compassed in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. From the call of Abraham to our own day is a comparatively recent record. In the first part of Genesis is an account of the origin of our planet and of the forms of life it supports. A competent scientist, being asked what he thought of this account, replied: "I doubt if it would be possible, even to-day, to write a better one in the same number of words." And yet this account is ages old and prepared for a race in its infancy.*

2. *It is a history of God's dealings with his chosen people.* In it the development of the fundamentals of our civilization can be traced.

(1) First there is a chosen man—Abraham; then a chosen family —that of Jacob or Israel; then a chosen nation—the Hebrews. The Mosaic code of the Hebrews is the basis of our jurisprudence to-day. Then the kingdom of Israel falls into decay, but a chosen tribe—Judah—is marked for issue; in that tribe a family—that of David—is indicated, and from that family comes a chosen man—Jesus Christ.

(2) The first mention of a fraternal tie is between Cain and Abel, sons of a common parentage (Gen. 4: 8). In Abraham's time the brotherhood idea has dvanced, for Lot, his nephew, is regarded as a brother (Gen. 13: 8). In Moses' day all Hebrews were brethren (Ex. 2: 11). At the end of the Mosaic dispensation One appeared who made *of one blood all the nations*, thus establishing universal kinship obligation, which is our best idea of fraternal relation.

(3) In the Old Testament three classes of leaders are over the people. They are the prophets who teach, the priests who intercede and the kings who rule. These really make the history of the Hebrew people. All of them seem to pass away before the final page is written, but the things they supplied to the people are finally supplied again in One who can be regarded as prophet, priest and king—teacher, intercessor and ruler of all who accept him. This is the heart of all religion.

3. *It is a history of the plan of salvation.* The transgression by which man fell from his first estate had scarcely been committed when plans for restoration were begun. The entire Old Testament is instinct with beckonings, wooings and promises. In all his hours of darkness, a brighter dawn is ever kept in prospect. In his farther wanderings he is not allowed to forget that a "land of promise" is ahead. The last page of the Old Testament gives definite assurance that "the Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings," and that "Elias" will come to herald His advent (Mal. 4: 1-6).

The first pages of the New Testament tell of One whose lineage is traceable to the house of David, the tribe of Judah and the seed of Abraham, and who was introduced by an austere prophet of the wilderness like Elijah of old.

*A book entitled "Creation; or, The Bible Cosmogony in the Light of Modern Science," by Prof. Arnold Guyot, LL.D. (Scribners', 1884), is strongly recommended to those desiring to pursue this subject further.

This remarkable personage teaches and performs many wonderful works. The multitudes attracted by his works are charmed by his words. Jewish antagonism is stirred. He is seized by his enemies, convicted on false testimony and crucified. On the third day the tomb, in which his body was laid, is found empty. After this he appeared to his disciples repeatedly, giving special evidences to those of the chosen twelve. He bids them go and tell all men that he is the Son of God who died to save from sin. Having thus completed his mission, he ascended to heaven. Four Gospel records tell of this. Fifty days after the crucifixion and ten days after the ascension, on the day of Pentecost, the apostles began their labors. The Book of Acts is a partial record of what they did. Churches were established in all provinces of the Roman Empire and grew rapidly, the facts concerning Jesus being well established by apostolic testimony and the congregations nourished by apostolic care. The Epistles contain such instruction as was needful "for correction, for reproof, and instruction in righteousness."

The Revelation granted to John in Patmos is a panoramic vision of what was then, and is still, much of it, perhaps, unfulfilled. This book is a fit closing for the Bible. The tree and the garden lost by transgression in Genesis are here restored, and the relationship of man to God is here renewed.

Of all histories ever written, that contained in the Bible is most important to mankind, and, intelligently read, no other can approach it in genuine, living interest.

II. The Bible is a Literature.

1. *The Historical.* As literature it is mostly historical in form. Its merit as historic narrative is noticeable. No needless words are used. Superfluities of style are avoided. Various positions of the Bible are in agreement with each other. Yet there are enough apparent discrepancies to demonstrate that the writers, even when contemporaneous, could not have been in collusion.

2. *The Didactic.* The didactical element is never wanting in the Bible. Much of the book is designed primarily for instruction, as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament and much of the Gospels and Epistles in the New. The aim is to present to the human mind that which in the end will produce a perfected life.

3. *The Devotional.* The devotional element is greater than either the historical or the didactical. Devotion to the true God is the aim of both history and teaching as found in the Bible. The volume is full of divinity, but some parts are purely devotional, as many of the Psalms and much of Isaiah and other prophetical books.

III. The Bible is a Revelation. When we have said that the Bible is a history and a literature, the greater part of the truth remains yet to be told. The modern form of unbelief that would stop there would bring the book to a human level. It is a revelation that the Bible stands supreme among books.*

1. *It is primary.* It shows how God has been speaking to man

*"The Bible and Other Ancient Literature in the Nineteenth Century," by L. T. Townsend (Chautauqua Press, 1889), is a little book that should be studied by every religious teacher and student of the Scriptures.

from the beginning. It tells of the simple worship carried on at an altar of earth in far-off days. It records the struggle of God's love and care to impress itself on an infant race. Its language is simple, even when dealing with deepest truth.

2. *It is progressive.* As the needs of man vary, and as his capacity develops, the primary method gives place to more mature revelations. The message is ever suited to the man and his nature so that it could truly be said that "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds."

The oral word and the midnight vision give place to the written record. The Word is made flesh, and the message of the incarnation is incorporated into a volume, only to be made flesh again in deeds of loving service as mankind is inspired by it. The altar of unhewn stone gives place to the tabernacle, the tabernacle to the temple and the temple to the church.

3. *It is perfect.* This is not to vouch that each letter, syllable or punctuation mark has been formed or placed by divine direction. No claim need be made for the Bible that the Bible does not make for itself. "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." For the purpose it is designed to serve, the Bible is a perfect revelation. Thus a tool, an instrument or a machine may serve the purpose of its being perfectly, and yet not be suited to other uses. Beginning with simplest ideas of the Creator, it leads out of the shadowy past and to a full blaze of glory, in which is One who bears in himself "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," or turning man to God.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Consider the Book of Ruth as a classic bit of literature.
2. Read David's lament over Saul and Jonathan and note its poetic quality (2 Sam. 1: 19-27).
3. Read Paul's Epistle to Philemon as a brief treatise on human responsibility under the gospel, sent by a slave that was being returned to his master.
4. Read Prov. 1: 7-19; Prov. 3: 1-4; Prov. 6: 6-11; Prov. 15: 1; Prov. 15: 16-20; Prov. 31: 10-31, as examples of the wisdom literature of the Bible.
5. Read the following as examples of Biblical forms of literature: Sampson's riddle—Judg. 13: 5-14; Jotham's parable—Judg. 9: 1-21; Nathan's parable—2 Sam. 12: 1-6. Also some forceful similes: Prov. 11: 22; Hag. 1: 6; 1 Cor. 13: 1; Jude 12. 13.
6. Discuss: How is the Bible inspired? (Inspired=breathed into.) (1) Are its writers inspired, or (2) is the story it tells and the plan it reveals inspired?
7. Considered as a "schoolmaster" (Gal. 3: 24), what benefits has the race had from the Old Testament Scriptures? (The schoolmaster here spoken of was one who accompanied pupils to school.)

LESSON II. THE BIBLE—WHAT IT CONTAINS

We have given some attention to the nature of the Book; we now come to a consideration of its contents.

The books or writings of the Old Testament were collected by Ezra the scribe, and, with the exception of Nehemiah and Malachi, which were written later, put in their present form about 457 B. C.

The books of the New Testament were assembled and a list of them published as early as 397, when the Council of Carthage convened.

The Scriptures were divided into chapters by Cardinal Hugo, in 1250. The division into verses was made some three centuries later. Though of great service in study, the chapter and verse divisions are often arbitrary and unfortunate.

The contents of the Bible may be studied

I. As to Continuity of Theme. The Old Testament begins with the earliest facts concerning the world and its inhabitants and ends with the promise of a renewed world. The line it follows is continuous, and proceeds through a chosen man, a chosen family and a chosen nation, giving such history, prophecy and poetry as are essential to the setting of the message conveyed.

The New Testament begins with a person—Jesus Christ—presenting him and his gospel

1. As a record of facts, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
2. As a proclamation sounded forth, in the Book of Acts.
3. As a force renewing society, in the epistolary writings, and
4. As a plan of redemption triumphant in fullness of time, in the Book of Revelation.

We should view the contents of the Bible

II. As to the Arrangement of Its Books.

1. The books of the Old Testament fall naturally into five divisions, as follows:

Law	5	books
History	12	"
Poetry	5	"
Major Prophets	5	"
Minor Prophets	12	"

(1) The five books of the Law, also called the Pentateuch, or the books of Moses, are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

(2) The twelve books of history are Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

(3) The five poetical books are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

(4) The writings of the Major Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel.

(5) The Minor Prophets are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The books of the New Testament are also separated into five groups; these are:

Biography	4	books
History	1	"
Special letters	14	"
General letters	7	"
Prophecy	1	"

(1) The biographical books are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They give brief and incomplete biographies of Jesus.

(2) The historical book is Acts. It covers the period of the apostolic labors, and tells of their success in proclaiming the gospel and in planting churches.

(3) The Special Letters are Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews. These are letters to churches and individuals, setting forth principles of the Christian doctrine and life.

(4) The General Letters are James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John and Jude. They are letters addressed to no one in particular, but treating subjects that are of general interest.

(5) The Book of Revelation is called "The Revelation." It is a series of panoramic visions shown to the apostle John when in exile on the island of Patmos, and recorded by him at divine direction.

It will be profitable to consider the contents of the Bible:

III. As to Harmony of Parts.

1. The Old Testament and the New are harmonious with each other.

(1) Prophecies of the Old are fulfilled in the New.

Prophecy.	Fulfillment.
Mic. 5: 2.	Matt. 2: 1-6.
Isa. 53: 7.	John 19: 1-9.
Isa. 53: 12.	Luke 23: 33.
Isa. 53: 9.	Matt. 27: 57-60.

(2) Events of the Old are pointed out in the New; as examples: Matt. 12: 3, 4; Matt. 12: 39, 40; Matt. 24: 37-39; 1 Cor. 10: 1-4; Heb. 11: 32-39.

(3) Characters portrayed are types of others in the New. Matt. 11: 13, 14; Acts 7: 37-40; Heb. 7: 15, 16, 17.

(4) Teachers and writers of the Old are honored in the New. Luke 4: 16-20; Acts 1: 16; Acts 8: 35; Acts 28: 23.

2. The institutions harmonize and support each other.

(1) The altar, at first a rude affair (Ex. 20: 24), persists in the tabernacle (Ex. 27: 1-8), in the temple (2 Chron. 4: 1-6) and in the church (Heb. 13: 10-13).

(2) Sacrifice, beginning in earliest time (Gen. 4: 3, 4), is a constant requirement even down to the present time (Rom. 12: 1).

(3) Intercession by priests, beginning under Moses (Ex. 28: 1), continues to our own day (Heb. 8: 1, 2).

(4) New Testament teachings are foreshadowed in the Old.

3. The central theme. Through all the Book runs what some have called "the red thread of purpose." From the record of a first disobedience, the evident aim of the whole Book is to reveal a plan by which

mankind may be redeemed from sin and restored to a state of holiness, or wholeness. By disciplines, teachings and by forgiveness, God has sought to win man to himself. His tender and eloquent appeals are frequent. His final appeal is Jesus Christ. Toward him all the Old Testament leads on; back to him all the New distinctly points. Truly he is the one who, in the Scriptures, is "all in all." Recognize him as the center of revelation, and the Book becomes plain as a diagram; miss him or leave him out, and it is a hopeless tangle of mystery.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Drill in naming the books of the Bible.
2. Drill in locating passages in the Bible; the first to find, rising; then the second, then the third, etc.
3. What book of the Bible is most interesting to you? What book of the New Testament? What one of the four Gospels recorded?
4. Make an argument for the inspiration of the Scriptures from the wonderful harmony of parts.
5. Question for debate: "*Resolved*, That the teachings of the Bible are of greater worth to mankind than are the teachings of science." (Take care not to convey the idea that one is opposed to the other, but labor to show the relation existing between them.)
6. Let each one give the best reason he can think of for holding to the Book.

LESSON III. THE MAN IN THE BOOK

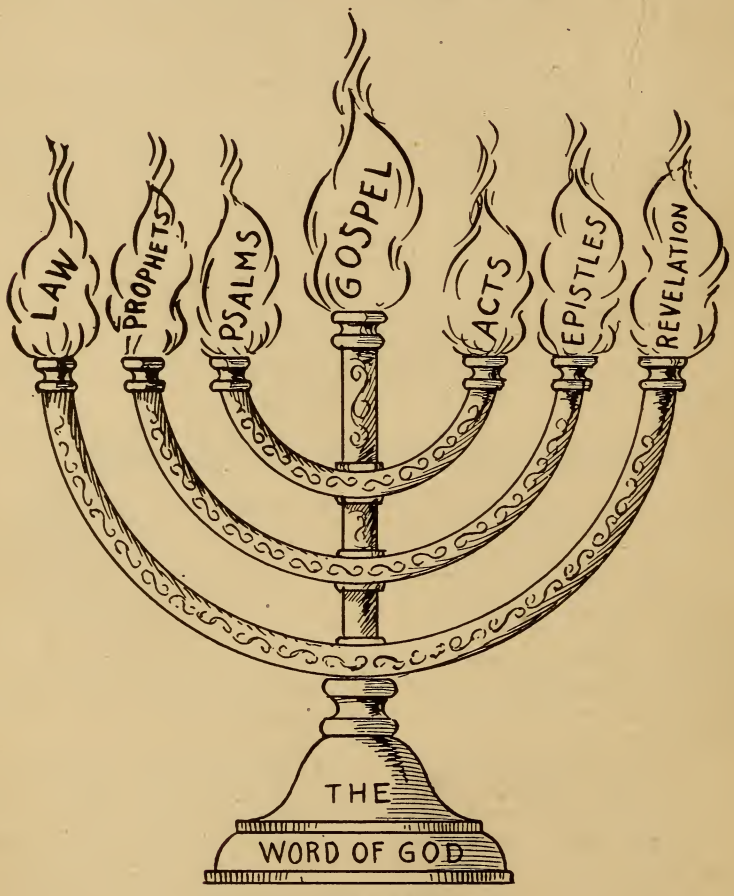
Life is the one thing of perennial interest to mankind. The tenderest sentiments of the heart are awakened by the coming and going of human life. Every precious memory has a person as its center. Each hallowed spot was once the setting of a life we loved. The books we value most are those that reveal to us lives true and beautiful. The study of a period of history or a portion of the earth's surface is significant, and interesting only as we know its people. The instinctive question of one who gazes for the first time upon our neighboring planets is, "Are these bodies inhabited—is there conscious life there?"

So, when we have studied the Bible as to its origin, character and contents, there remains yet the vitalizing topic of it all, the central character—the man in the Book. The present lesson is meant to give in perspective the relative relation of Jesus Christ to other characters of the Book, and to its purposes. It aims to furnish for the student a single landmark from which to run out his lines of research into the fields of revelation.

I. Jesus and the Documents of the Bible.

1. *The arrangement.* It is not necessary to claim divine guidance for those instrumental in arranging the various portions of the sacred Scriptures as they appear in our present-day Bible. The catalogue of books, as it stands to-day, was the result of growth and development rather than of definite design on the part of any person or persons, yet the place occupied by the records of our Lord's life is too significant to be passed without remark.

As referred to by Jesus (Luke 24: 48), the Old Testament is divided into three parts—Law, Prophets and Psalms. The Christian writings, those belonging to the new dispensation, fall roughly into a threefold classification—History, Epistles and Revelation. Midway between these are the four biographies of Jesus, belonging to the old in point of time, but written under the new dispensation. Thus the central illumination of this illuminating volume is the record of one life.



THE GOLDEN LAMPSTAND.

The golden lampstand of the Jewish Tabernacle is regarded as a type of the word of God which gives light by the Spirit of God. The lampstand with its seven lamps may well illustrate the position of the Gospel records in the canon, there being three lesser lights on the left for Law, Prophets and Psalms, and three on the right for History, Epistles and Revelation, with a larger central flame for the biographies of our Lord.

2. *The subject-matter.* The earliest chapters of the first written

books of the Bible have distinct intimations and promises that point unmistakably to the life revealed in the Gospels. (See Gen. 3: 15; 4: 3, 4; 49: 9, 10.) There is scarcely a book of the thirty-nine in the Old Testament that does not add its cheering ray in promise of the Sun of righteousness that is to rise. In some, as Isaiah, and several of the Minor Prophets, the burden of prophetic expression seethes and swells like a torrent half restrained. The New Testament books have but one topic, "Christ, and Him Crucified;" all else contained in them —history, doctrine, promise and prediction—is dependent for value upon its relation to him and what he said.

3. *The impression made.* It is hard for those who have known the Bible from times of earliest memory to realize how it would be received by an adult mind perusing it for the first time. Would such an one be satisfied with the Old Testament alone? Would he not rather feel his heart hungering, as did the Jews when the Christian era began, for Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write? Would not the Gospels meet this need? Would not the Acts reveal the "way" for his feet? Would not the New Testament entire supply all things necessary that the man of God might be complete, "furnished completely unto every good work"? It is little less than marvelous that a collection from different authors in different lands, covering sixteen hundred years, should impress the human mind as a single work and make uniform impression on all minds. Is it not clear that one mind used many agents to convey the truth about one person?

II. Jesus and the Doctrines of the Bible. There are but a few great fundamental doctrines in the Bible. These are designed to meet the few fundamental needs of human nature in this present world. If we consider the needs, we shall then be better able to see how Christ supplies them in the teaching of the Book.

1. *Man needs to know God.* The heart-cry of the race found expression from the lips of Philip when he said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14: 8). That this was a real need, and not a fancy, appears from the words of Jesus, "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God" (John 17: 3).

To supply this need, God must be *revealed.* Already he had made himself known as a God who *is*—"I am" (Ex. 3: 14); later as a God who *guides* (Ex. 13: 21, 22), and later still as a God who *provides* (Ex. 17: 6). But there is need of a closer relation. It is not enough for a son to know that his father lives, counsels and provides. He may be aware of all this, and not be much profited by it; there must be friendship, companionship, mutual love. Such, also, is man's need of a heavenly parent. In Jesus' personal life God is revealed as fully as it is possible for him to be revealed to human nature. Jesus answered Philip's request with: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?" and the passage already quoted in part (John 17: 3), "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God," concludes with, "and *him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.*"

2. *Man needs redemption from sin.* He is a prodigal perishing with hunger in a far country—eating the bitter herbs of exile among the enemies of his Father. The godliness is marred, the garments

of righteousness are in tatters, self-respect is gone. Man is at variance with God, and no sort of salvation will suffice unless it restore the lost relationship. Atonement must be made—an at-one-ment that will reconcile man to God. This, Jesus provides, for "as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1: 12). All theorizing as to how this was done is out of place. Here the fact is stated, and our hearts should throb with gratitude that we have "received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father," and that we are thus made "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ" (Rom. 8: 14-17).

In the Old Testament we see many offerings for sin and many pathetic gropings after the unseen hand, but in Jesus the deed is wrought out to completion, and man is restored to God, bought with a price, and made joint-heir with Jesus Christ.

3. *Man needs discipline—training.* We are told concerning the Israelites and their wanderings that "these things happened unto them for examples," and that "they are recorded for our admonition." But, after the chidings and chastenings of fifteen hundred years, how derelict still is the chosen people of God. And they are the best of many, many nations. Evidently, a program to *save* man must be different from this in its elemental makeup. Jesus proposed to rule those who come to him on principles hitherto untried. Note the following contrasts set forth in his early declarations:

THE OLD WAY.	THE NEW WAY.
Thou shalt not kill.	Thou shalt not be angry with thy brother.
Thou shalt not commit adultery.	Thou shalt not harbor an impure thought.
Thou shalt not forswear thyself.	Swear not at all . . . let your speech be yea, yea, and nay, nay: whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.
An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.	Resist not him that is evil: whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also.
Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy.	Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you.
When, therefore, thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee as the hypocrites do in the synagogues.	When thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.
And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets.	But thou, when thou prayest, enter into the inner chamber, and, having shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret.
When ye fast, be not as the hypocrite, of a sad countenance.	But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou be not seen of men to fast.
Lay not up for yourself treasures upon the earth.	Lay up for yourself treasures in heaven.
Be not anxious for your life. . . . After all these things do the Gentiles seek.	But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.
Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that enter in thereby.	Narrow is the gate and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.
Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.	But he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven (he shall enter in).

The list could be extended indefinitely. Revolutionary as these teachings seem to be, Jesus lived them literally, and though by so doing he lost his life, it was only to find it anew, and Christendom is the result. No other ruler, nor all rulers and teachers combined, has produced any program for human control and development that is even similar to this *in kind*, not to mention in the success it has attained.

III. Jesus and the Characters of the Bible. Every great event is directly related to some great personality. In every important period of history there is an individual who towers above his fellows. In an epoch of many periods one will overtop the rest, and in that one is the man who gives significance to the rest of the epoch. The national life of a people has its zenith of prosperity and power, and always at this point stands an individual, the pride of his nation. There will be a climax in the history of our planet; it will come when King Jesus shall reign supreme on land and sea. Every state, nation and race has its honored sons. One among them all, and only one, has been called "the Son of man;" in Him is revealed the "desire of nations," and "unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."

The Bible roll of honorables is a long one, and illustrious: Abraham —honored as "father of the faithful" by three great religions; Moses —the lawgiver, and upon whose life labors rests the jurisprudence of civilization; Samuel—the judge and ruler of his people; Elijah—the austere prophet who feared not the face of man; David—the sweet singer of Israel; Isaiah—the suffering servant who prefigured the Master's mission; Ezekiel—the lone prophet of exile; and Daniel—the captive in whom there was no guile. Coming, then, to the New Testament, we have Peter—first to proclaim the gospel; James—the wise leader at Jerusalem; and John—youngest of the apostolic group, first in the affections of the Lord, and last to leave the scene of earthly service. Then Paul and the illustrious group about him, they truly great, but ranking lesser in contrast with him. These are but a few of the more notable ones. Truly these are the world's most renowned men.

But in their midst is One, to use a prophetic phrase, "like unto the Son of man." One whom we do not think of naming with the rest. Divine in wisdom, power and love, though human in physical form and earthly relationships, with one hand He brings Deity into the circle of human perception, and with the other anoints the eyes of man so that he may look and live. His personality has never been explained and accounted for, and never will be by finite mind. The world's greatest theologian exclaimed:

> "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness;
> He who was manifested in the flesh,
> Justified in the spirit,
> Seen of angels,
> Preached among the nations,
> Believed on in the world,
> Received up in glory" (1 Tim. 3:16).

The apostle of love, most intimate with the Lord, failed utterly to fathom his personality, and could only say of him:

"That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal *life,* which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)" (1 John 1 : 1, 2).

Even the world's greatest warrior, used as he was to violence and carnage, in the enforced retirement of his later years fell to contemplating Jesus Christ, and, among other splendid tributes paid him, said:

I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religion the distance of infinity. . . . Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne and myself founded empires. But upon what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon *force.* Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him.—*From an address by Napoleon.*

But we are not dependent upon the opinions of great men for our estimate of Jesus in comparison with others. The distance between him and whoever else we consider is evident to any thoughtful mind. As seen among the great ones of sacred history, his excellence appears:

1. *In the precedence accorded Him by all others.*

(1) The prophecies, types and observances of the Old Testament forecast his coming, scarcely a teacher or writer of them all failing to bear testimony.

(2) Moses and Elijah, representatives of law and prophecy, appear on the mount discussing with him "*his decease, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.*"

(3) John the Baptist, the greatest of them all, said, "*He must increase, but I must decrease.*"

(4) Paul's message, though he could have taught men "with excellence of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming . . . the testimony of God," was "*Jesus Christ and him crucified*" (1 Cor. 1: 1, 2).

(5) John, having seen somewhat of the glories of the world to come, was content to be assured and to assure others that "*we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*"

2. *In the nature of His personality.* Never once do his associates include him in a catalogue or class with themselves, or with any other man. No man can read the records of his life preserved to us, and then say "Jesus Christ and Saint Paul," or "Jesus Christ and Julius Cæsar," or "Jesus Christ and George Washington." There are similarities, but they are borrowed—they are the similarities of the teakettle to the locomotive, of the electric motor to the central dynamo, of the candle to the noonday sun. Jesus himself never once placed himself by word or inference on a level with humanity. His particular relation to God is everywhere maintained. The disciple's prayer begins "Our Father," but his own uses the simple word "Father."

3. *In the extent of His influence.* Others shine as lights in an era or period. Their influence rises to a climax and then declines to the end. His has grown steadily from the first and was never so great as to-day. All ages are his, and all nationalities hear the story of his sacrifice with sentiments of tender compassion, responding with

changed lives. Only the vain and thoughtless speak lightly of him, and even these, as well as the most debased, revere his name, once the exterior crust is pierced. It seems assured, judging even from what has already been accomplished under the handicap of division and erroneous teaching, that Christianity will overspread the earth. Its power of extension and reproduction is the marvel of the race.

"Of the angels he saith,
Who maketh his angels winds,
And his ministers a flame of fire:
but of the Son *he saith*,
Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Heb. 2:7-9).

"But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, *even* Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every *man*. For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:9, 10).

Subjects for Discussion

1. Using the golden lampstand as a type, what position do the various parts of Scripture bear to the biographies of Jesus?

2. What various means are used in the Old Testament to foreshadow the coming One?

3. Name some Old Testament characters who stand as types of the Saviour.

4. What does Paul mean by "Christ and him crucified," as applied to his preaching?

5. In what essentials does Jesus Christ differ from all other individuals known on earth?

6. What does it signify to confess that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"? Why is this made the essential and central point of Christian doctrine?

LESSON IV. THE MAN AND THE BOOK

In new countries government surveys are made and landmarks set, so that any controversy that may arise over boundary-lines can be effectually settled. The human mind needs something that can be safely "tied to." Not having a "sure word of prophecy," or some place of anchorage for the soul, disintegration is sure to result. No better evidence of this can be desired than the state of human society in countries where Christ and his gospel are not known, or where he has been supplanted by the Pope with his priesthood and image worship. The New Testament reveals a single creed; that creed has a single object of faith; that one object of faith is a *person*—Jesus Christ. He is our beginning-point religiously.

Those who would become Christians, or followers of Christ, in New Testament times, confessed that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." On this "good confession," as upon a ledge of rock, our Lord asserted that he would build his church. Paul said, "Other foundation

can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3: 11), so on this one fact of revelation all essential Christian doctrine rests. From this well-assured, oft-confessed and eternally fixed point of survey, all necessary lines of investigation can be thrown out.

From here we will start in our investigation of the Old Testament Scriptures. There are many angles from which these writings may be viewed, but, for those who accept Jesus as the Son of God, the most conclusive is to note carefully the value placed upon them by him in his teaching. It will, of course, be remembered that Jesus had only the Old Testament or Jewish Scriptures, but the Old Testament of his day was the same as it is now, hence his testimony concerning it will be invaluable. As for the New Testament, it, too, is to be weighed and valued by its relation to him, but the processes differ. The Old we view through Christ, while the New becomes to us an instrument through which we view Christ. The result, in each case, is the same. While the firm grasp of the Old Testament we get at the feet of the great Teacher helps us to better appreciate its value, the clear view of the Teacher himself afforded through the New is proof of its accuracy and reliability. This point is illustrated in the present lesson: our study considers Christ in relation to the Jewish Scriptures, but our source of information on the subject is the Christian Scriptures, so that the two keep even pace in our confidence as we proceed, Jesus Christ being the illuminant of both.

To proceed, we will consider:

I. Jesus and the Authority of the Jewish Scriptures.

1. *Early in his ministry our Lord took care to avoid being represented as in any way antagonistic to the Scriptures* (Matt. 5: 17, 18).

2. *The Old Testament was the witness most frequently cited by him to establish his identity* (Matt. 27: 42; Mark 14: 29; Luke 4: 21; 24: 44; John 5: 39; 7: 42).

3. *The Scriptures were referred to by him as an infallible source of appeal* (John 10: 34-36). In this passage the Greek verb, translated "broken," signifies to disintegrate or dissolve. Whatever elements of strength the Old Testament then had it still has, save that, as a law of life, it has been displaced by the gospel. Its prophecies, even though fulfilled, would be stronger to-day, on this very account, than they were then.

4. *The commands given by Moses were referred to by Jesus as the commands of God* (Matt. 15: 4; 22: 31, 32; Mark 7: 8-13). In the last passage, note that the command quoted is referred to as from Moses (v. 10), and later on spoken of as "the word of God" (v. 13).

II. Jesus and the Authorship of the Jewish Scriptures. We would not expect Jesus to play the part of a critic and go about adjusting the niceties of literature, yet, believing him to be the Son of God, whatever he had to say as to the Scriptures as he found them will be of deepest interest.

1. *He quoted from the Psalms and assigned the language to David* (Luke 20: 41-44). It can not be urged that Jesus was here accommodating himself to the belief of the people that David wrote this passage, for his whole argument depends upon the Davidic authorship.

2. *"The Law," or the Mosaic code, contained in the Pentateuch is referred to by him as having come from Moses* (Matt. 8: 4; 19: 8; John 5: 45-47; 7: 19-23). These passages are chosen from many such in the New Testament.

3. *"The Prophets," referring to the prophetic writings, were classed, in integrity, with the works attributed to Moses* (Luke 10: 16; 24: 27, 44).

III. Jesus' Practical Use of the Scriptures.

1. *He used the word of God to foil and defeat the tempter* (Luke 4: 1-13). Note how fully each proposal of the devil is met by the passage quoted.

2. *He used words of Scripture to rebuke wrong-doing* (Matt. 21: 12, 13).

3. *He attributed error to ignorance of the Scriptures* (Matt. 22: 29), *and used the Scriptures to correct wrong impressions* (Luke 24: 25-32).

4. *He made use of Scripture for purposes of exhortation* (John 7: 37, 38).

5. *He used the Scriptures to silence objectors* (Matt. 22: 41-45).

No higher testimonial to the integrity and authority of the Scriptures can be imagined than is that shown in Jesus' use of them. If the Son of God, by whom the worlds were framed, fell back upon their utterances so confidently, must they not be of God? To the purposes for which they were designed, and the age in which they were used, these writings were perfectly fitted—they were indeed God's revelation to man.

But what of the Christian Scriptures? As before suggested, they serve us as a lens through which to view the perfect life of our Lord. They have other uses, but this is of prime importance. How can we judge of their quality, since Jesus lived before they were written and therefore could have no word concerning them? There is a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation wrought by a skilled penman so that by the shadings of the letters the portrait of a human face is shown on the page. In reading the document this feature is scarcely noticeable, but on holding the paper at arm's-length one is almost startled to note the face of the honored Lincoln looking forth from it. It did not happen so, but is the result of design from first to last. The New Testament shows such a portrait of Jesus Christ to the eye of faith. In the Gospels he is portrayed, in the Acts he is proclaimed, in the Epistles he is shown working to transform human life, and in the Revelation his final triumph is revealed. This is not accidental; one mind planned it all. "It is a revelation," says Smyth, "clear enough to render faith possible and obscure enough to leave unbelief possible." The value of a lens is shown by the clearness of view it makes possible. Judged by this standard, the New Testament takes its place by the side of the Old as having come from God, so that it as well as the Old is included when we say:

"God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1: 1, 2).

Subjects for Discussion

1. What one truth revealed from God is the central truth of all revelation, and why? Give illustrations of its relation to other truths.

2. Give three quotations of the Old Testament made by Jesus, and tell of the occasions on which they were used.

3. What are we to infer when Jesus assigns certain passages to Moses and David instead of to the authors claimed for these books by certain critics:

(1) Was Jesus ignorant, or

(2) Did he know and accommodate himself to public opinion, or

(3) Are the critics mistaken?

4. If used in the same way, will the Scriptures serve men to-day as well as they served our Lord when he used them?

5. What is the evident purpose of the four Gospel writers judged by the records they have left us? Read John 20: 30, 31.

LESSON V. THE BOOK IN THE WORLD

"Who is he?" asked an onlooker concerning one prominent in a certain parade. "Oh, he's the man who ended the vote-selling business in Ohio," answered a bystander. He was known by what he had done. Who is Dewey? The man who won the fight at Manila before breakfast. Who is Hobson? The man who sunk the "Merrimac" in Santiago harbor. Who are the Wright brothers? The men who made flying-machines work. Who is Burbank? The man who performed miracles in plant-breeding. Who is Booker T. Washington? The man who inaugurated industrial training for the negro. Who is Ashley S. Johnson? The man who provided "a way out" for every industrious boy who wants to preach the gospel. So the story lengthens and grows in luster. What a thing is, is determined by what it does.

The Bible must be subjected to this practical test, whether we will or no. It is not enough to say the Book is sacred, and stop at that; similar claims are made for other books; how does it compare with them? It will not suffice to say it is inspired; does its inspiration spread to mankind to produce other books and inspire them? It will not satisfy a workaday world to be informed that this volume contains a plan of salvation; does it really save men from sin and self? We shall better appreciate the Bible when we have asked and answered these questions concerning it.

I. Its Power to Survive the Changes of Time and the Assaults of Its Opposers.

1. The *religions of paganism*, of the Egyptians, of the Teutons and of the Druids were powerful and popular, each in its day and place. They have been preserved to us in classic page. The genius of the ancients spent itself on the exaltation of popular deities. But their altars have crumbled and their power is gone. The Bible takes note of these systems where it is forced into contact with them, only to challenge and condemn. The history of the chosen people is but a record of life-and-death struggles with these now vanished delusions.

The Bible marks progress with the setting of each sun, but who can find a worshiper of Baal, or of Diana, or of Zeus, or of Wodin? Napoleon has made vivid contrast between these and the Bible system:

> Paganism is the work of man. One can here read our imbecility. What do these gods so boastful know more than other mortals? These legislators, Greek and Roman? This Numa, this Lycurgus? These priests of India or Memphis? This Confucius? This Mohammed? Absolutely nothing. They have made a perfect chaos of morals. There is not one among them all who has said any new thing in reference to our future destiny, to the soul, to the essence of God, to the creation. . . . Are these religions and these gods to be compared to Christianity?

2. The case has not been different with the *Eastern religions* that yet live—Buddhism, Confucianism and Mohammedanism. Each of these began as though it would cover the whole earth, but limitations have been found. National boundaries, ocean shores, the border-lines of differing civilizations and race characteristics forbid progress after a time. Even in the corrupted forms prevalent in Europe, Christianity has effectually dammed the current of idolatry and mysticism, so that, to gain any hearing at all in Western lands, they must be effectually disguised and labeled "Theosophy," "Mormonism," "Christian Science," or some other such misleading designation. Meanwhile, the Bible, in spite of treachery at the hands of its reputed friends—popish pretensions, theological substitutions and denominational disruptions—shows an astonishing power to propagate and disseminate itself in all lands and among every people.

3. The Bible has had *some historic conflicts* and has come off victorious in every instance. It clashed with pagan Rome, and Rome went down, so doughty a skeptic as Gibbon ranking Christianity as one of the causes of the decline and fall of the empire. Papal Rome arose, but the Bible, in the hands of a German monk, cut her foul fallacies to the heart. Skepticism rushed rampant to the fray, but the attack was futile; skepticism, like criticism, has the elements of self-destruction inborn. Renan would not fellowship Voltaire. Strauss could not abide Paulus. Rationalist, pantheist and deist ruefully touch finger-tips for want of other companionship, but each with the fingers of the other hand crossed. The destructive higher critic of our day will not openly eulogize Tom Paine and Volney, but, with them, he must be content to "choose the sunny side of doubt," and live on as best he can. Meanwhile, the times of its greatest trial have been rally-seasons for a new advance for the Bible, and the old Book still stands. Often overturned, like a block of granite equal in three dimensions, it is as big one way as the other. There is little need that human hands be reached out to steady this ark of God; it will not perish.

II. Its Power to Inspire Mankind.

1. *Great leaders have been Bible men.* The recorded history of the race is but a record of revivals of the inner consciousness of men. Every great era of progress was prefaced by a religious reformation. Every reformation grew out of renewed Bible study. At the dawn of each epoch stands a resolute individual whose visions and convictions have been shaped by Bible teaching. Witness Huss, Savonarola, Luther, Cromwell and Lincoln as examples.

Said King David:

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And light unto my path."

Said George Washington:

It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.

Said Abraham Lincoln:

In regard to the great Book, I have only this to say, that it is the best gift which God has given to man.

Said William E. Gladstone:

Talk about the questions of the time: there is but one question—how to bring the truths of God's word into vital contact with the minds and hearts of all classes of people.

2. *Men of genius have been profoundly influenced by the Bible.* Dr. Johnson, England's great critic, referring to Addison, said:

Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar, but not coarse, and elegant, but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison.

And Addison, this peer of English stylists, speaking of the Bible, said:

Homer has innumerable flights that Virgil was not able to reach, and in the Old Testament we find several passages more elevated and sublime than any in Homer.

Thomas Carlyle said of the Book of Job:

I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written by man.

Charles Dickens once wrote:

In the New Testament there is the most beautiful and affecting history conceivable by man, and there are the most terse models for all prayer and all preaching.

The one sentence, which, often repeated by Abraham Lincoln, became the keynote of his life-work, was, "This nation can not endure half slave and half free," and this was always prefaced or succeeded by the Bible quotation that inspired it: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." From his earliest years the Bible was the book of his counsel.

3. *The Bible is particularly the book of the common people.* The eloquent and learned De Tocqueville came to America from France, in behalf of his nation, to study our form of government and our institutions. On returning, he reported to the French Senate the results of his investigation, and in the report used these words:

I went at your bidding to study the conditions that have led to the success of this people. I went up and down their valleys and climbed their mountains. I visited their centers of industry and emporiums of trade. I walked in their halls of learning and their courts of justice. But I sought everywhere in vain. It was only when I sat in the church on the Sabbath day and listened to the soul-elevating and soul-equalizing influence of the word of God, as it fell upon the ears of the common people, that I learned the secret of why America is free and France is a slave.

Better, perhaps, than any other modern writer, Henry Van Dyke

has described the influence of the Scriptures on the life of the race. In a recent magazine article he says:

Born in the East and clothed in Oriental form and imagery, the Bible walks the ways of all the world with familiar feet and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the heart of man. It comes into the palace to tell the monarch that he is the servant of the Most High, and into the cottage to assure the peasant that he is the son of God. Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. It has a word of peace for the time of peril, a word of comfort for the day of calamity, a word of light for the hour of darkness. Its oracles are repeated in the assembly of the people, and its counsels whispered in the ear of the lonely. The wicked and the proud tremble at its warning, but to the wounded and the penitent it has a mother's voice. The wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad by it, and the fire on the hearth has lit the reading of its well-worn page. It has woven itself into our deepest affections and colored our dearest dreams; so that love and friendship, sympathy and devotion, memory and hope, put on the beautiful garments of its treasured speech, breathing of frankincense and myrrh. Above the cradle and beside the grave its great words come to us uncalled. They fill our prayers with power larger than we know, and the beauty of them lingers on our ears long after the sermons which they adorned have been forgotten. They return to us swiftly and quietly, like doves flying from far away. They surprise us with new meanings, like springs of water breaking forth from the mountain beside a long-trodden path. They grow richer, as pearls do when they are worn near the heart. No man is poor or desolate who has this treasure for his own. When the landscape darkens and the trembling pilgrim comes to the Valley named of the Shadow, he is not afraid to enter: he takes the rod and staff of Scripture in his hand; he says to friend and comrade, "Good-by; we shall meet again;" and, comforted by that support, he goes towards the lonely pass as one who climbs through darkness into light. The mordant wit of Voltaire, the lucid and melancholy charm of Renan, have not availed to drive or draw the world away from the Bible; and the effect of all assaults have been to leave it more widely read, better understood, and more intelligently admired than ever before.

III. Its Power for Human Uplift. Without other aid than the natural tendency of things, the Bible has come to be considered as a sort of measuring-rod or plumb-line in things moral.

A devout French Senator paid his hotel bill in advance. The landlord said, "Just a moment, Senator, and I will make out a receipt." "I do not care for a receipt," was the answer; "let God witness that I have paid." "Oh," exclaimed the other, "do you still believe in God and the Bible?" "Certainly I do," said the Senator, turning back; "don't you?" "By no means." "Well, then," said the good man, drawing himself up at the desk, "in that case you may give me a receipt."

Wherever the Bible is received, studied and held in high esteem, a better state of things begins at once. We let this pass as a matter of course; but it is in fact one of the highest possible commendations of the Book. We can have space for but a few citations.

1. *It elevates the individual.* Ling-Ching-Ting was a Chinese sorcerer. He was a liar, gambler, and, for twenty years, an opium-smoker. The story of his conversion and subsequent life is thus told in "The Success of Modern Missions," a tract by F. M. Rains:

He heard the gospel day after day with increasing interest, until he believed and obeyed. What he believed in his heart he must now tell to others. He went among his own, telling of the wonderful things of the true God. Friends tried to dissuade him from preaching the doctrine of the "Foreign Devils." But, like Paul, he would not be quiet. He was pelted with clods and stones, and beaten and bruised, and driven from place to place, but he could

not be stopped. At last he was brought before a cruel magistrate, false witnesses brought against him the vilest of false charges, and the corrupt judge sentenced him to receive two thousand stripes! And upon his bare back a cruel bamboo was mercilessly laid until the flesh lay in strips. He said to the Christian doctor with a smile: "Teacher, this poor body be in great pain, but my inside heart be in great peace." When only half well he stole away to preach again to his heartless persecutors. Ling-Ching-Ting preached faithfully the riches of salvation for fourteen years, when he passed away singing, in the joy of an unclouded hope. He won hundreds of converts, and a score of native preachers learned from him to preach the gospel of Christ.

The story of another Chinese convert is thus told in the same tract:

Some years ago, Lough Fook, a Christian Chinaman, moved with compassion for the coolies in South America, sold himself for a term of five years as a coolie slave that he might carry the gospel to his countrymen. He toiled in the mines with them and preached the gospel while he toiled, till he had scores of whom he could speak, as did Paul of Onesimus, "whom I have begotten in my bonds." This is a noble example of the possible spiritual power of the despised Chinaman. Lough Fook died a few years ago, but not until he had won to the gospel about two hundred followers, whom he left behind in the membership of a church. He said: "The missionaries will go to China to preach to my countrymen, but the missionaries will not be sent to the mines in South America to preach to my countrymen there." To a Christian Chinaman belongs the unique honor of wearing the Saviour's bonds in voluntary servitude.

2. It transforms society. In 1794 thirty missionaries were sent from England to Tahiti in the Pacific Ocean. Of this island it is said:

The people of Tahiti not only worshiped innumerable gods, but also the spirits of deceased ancestors. Immorality, polygamy and infanticide prevailed to a wonderful extent. The children were generally killed by strangling or by piercing with a bamboo. A missionary once asked three women, whom he casually met, whether they had killed any of their children. One replied that she had killed nine; another, seven, and another, three. A father of nineteen children confessed to the murder of them all, and after hearing the gospel he wept at the remembrance of their deaths. The wife of a chief was greatly troubled in the hour of her death by remembering that she had put to death her sixteen children. Captain Cook said: "There is a scale of dissolute sensuality which this people have ascended wholly unknown to every other nation, and which no imagination could possibly conceive."

After sixteen years a substantial beginning was made. A chapel was built by request of the king. Converts began to be numbered by hundreds. The national idol Oro was made a post for the king's kitchen, and finally cut up for firewood. In 1839 Captain Harvey made the following observation concerning Tahiti:

This is the most civilized place I have seen in the South Seas. It is governed by a dignified young lady of twenty-five years of age. They have a good code of laws, and no liquors are allowed to be landed on the island. It is one of the most gratifying sights the eye can witness, to see on Sunday in their church, which holds about five thousand people, the queen near the pulpit with all her subjects around her, decently clothed and seemingly in pure devotion.

It is now twelve years since Dr. Dye opened a mission station where the Congo River crosses the Equator. It was a wilderness inhabited by savages of the most depraved type.

Now the Bolenge Church is one of the most wonderful in the world. With 221 members, it supports twenty-two native evangelists in the field. It clings to the policy of supporting one out of each ten members as a missionary. These missionaries evangelize the surrounding country. Sometimes they remain away from the station two months or more at a time.

The following is clipped from a most interesting leaflet containing the story, "Christmas on the Congo," as told by Mrs. Dye:

I could not help contrasting with those of the early years, when the attendance was very small, there being only the few who came from a sense of obligation, as all connected in any way with the mission were expected to attend. In those days there were very few women who came, then always besmeared with the red complexion powder so much admired (by them), and often being occupied during the service in pulling out the eyelashes of their babies. Could any one imagine a greater change? Five hundred people gathered with one accord to commemorate the birth of their newly found Saviour! Young men, young women, men with their wives and their children, old, gray-haired grandmothers, all there, clean, quiet and attentive, that no word of the blessed message be lost! Changed by the power of God from the rankest heathenism, fiercest cannibalism and unspeakable immorality, to the peace and purity of children of God!

At the close of that memorable service, Dr. Dye stepped down from the platform and took the confessions of thirty people. Never before in our lives had we witnessed so impressive a sight, for among them were six very old women, previously the very bulwark of fetichism and superstition. The "same hour" the whole congregation went to the river-side, where Dr. Dye and Mr. Hensey baptized thirty. Buried, buried with Christ, arisen to walk in newness of life—what a load of sin too black and horrible for contemplation is buried with some of them in the deep, dark waters of the mighty Congo, and what a depth of meaning to those in the new life into which they have entered.—*"Christmas on the Congo," by Mrs. Royal J. Dye.*

And the work of human uplift by means of the Bible is as yet a relatively new enterprise. But note what has been accomplished by Bible-inspired workers in a century:

One hundred years ago there were barely one hundred lonely, poorly equipped foreign missionaries in all the world. To-day there are nineteen thousand of them, scattered in every land that the sun shines on. They are, for the most part, college-bred, well-equipped, choice men and women. And they have gathered about them, and in turn have trained, eighty thousand native evangelists and teachers, who preach the gospel of Christ every day to their people in their own dialect.

One hundred years ago there were practically no native Christians in heathen lands. To-day there is a native church of over 1,500,000. The medical missionaries are treating three million patients a year. There are one million pupils in the Christian schools in heathen lands.—*A. E. Cory, in "The Challenge of World Conquest."*

Subjects for Discussion

1. Is it right or wrong to test a book by what it does for those who read it? How does the same rule work when applied to men or institutions?

2. Cite some instances you have known where Bible influence has done remarkable things in elevating human nature.

3. Of what value is the Bible school as a force for good, and why?

4. Why do Bible teachings elevate human morals? Is it by appeal to fear or to a sense of right or a feeling of responsibility to God?

5. Why is it that if a man gets right with God he is right in all the relationships of life?

PART II.

FIVE LESSONS ON EVIDENCE

Lesson VI. Faith and Evidence.
Lesson VII. The Testimony of Competent Witnesses.
Lesson VIII. The Testimony of Authentic Records.
Lesson IX. The Testimony of Christian Consciousness.
Lesson X. The Testimony of Prophecy.

LESSON VI. FAITH AND EVIDENCE

"We walk by faith and not by sight" was spoken by Paul as a parenthesis, but it has become an axiom of the Christian religion. Some have seen in it an objection, asserting that men must know before they can believe. Such, however, is not the case. In every field of research, we must believe before we can even begin to know. To illustrate:

Those who take up astronomy are confronted with what is called the law of gravitation, by which, it is claimed, all heavenly bodies are held in their courses. This law one must accept as true *on faith*, for it can not be demonstrated. Refusing to do so, he goes no further, for this unproven hypothesis is the basis of all progress.

Those who study electricity are taught that electric waves are transmitted by a universal ether, which fills all space—even that occupied by visible and material bodies. This wonderful substance is not exhibited or explained. The student may doubt its existence, but, if he does, he can not understand or explain what follows. He must believe the unknowable before he can know.

It is the same in the study of matter. Scientists say that all matter is made up of molecules. Now, a molecule is so small that one authority says, "If we should attempt to count the number of molecules in a pin's head, counting at the rate of ten million in a second, we should require 250,000 years."* Yet we are informed that molecules are subdivided into atoms and atoms into electrones. These subdivisions of matter are so minute as to be unseeable and unthinkable, and it is the privilege of every one who will, to deny and reject the whole theory. But it is the only theory that will explain the facts that are to follow. The wise student believes, and goes forward, for thus only can any progress be made.

When we come to religion, we should not be surprised that faith

*Gage's Physics, p. 7.

stands at the very threshold. "Without faith it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to him *must believe* that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The existence of God can not be proven or disproven. To prove that God is, and that, as devout people believe, he is everywhere present, spirit must be made visible, or at least perceptible, for "God is spirit." Mankind has no sense whereby we can know spirit; hence it is written, "No man hath seen God at any time." To prove that God is not, one must first be assured that he has accurate knowledge of all existing things; *i. e.*, that there is no invisible, intangible force or existence in the world. In addition to this, as H. W. Everest has said, "He must be omnipresent, or where he is not God may be; and omniscient, or the one thing which he does not know may be that there is a God." If this were possible, if any being were able to be everywhere at once, and to know all things, then that being is himself God.

The same is true of all other important truths of revealed religion. They can not be proven. If they could,

1. The system would at once be open to condemnation as purely human in origin, because wholly within the circle of human reason.

2. The necessity of revelation from God would be banished, for what a man can prove true by evidences at hand, he could have found out for himself.

3. Man would be robbed of free agency; he would be under intellectual compulsion. As it is, he can believe or disbelieve *as he may will*, for while belief has to do chiefly with the intellect, the "balance of power," which leads to decision, lies with the will; therefore Christ could consistently say, "He that believeth not shall be condemned," for he had already said, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak of myself." Man can bring himself to believe in Jesus Christ if he wills to do so, merely by doing His will.

The Christian religion rests its case on the proposition that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." Other things are accepted by Christians as true, but this is the one fundamental fact, without which Christianity would not have been, without which the church could not live on, and to which every other Christian teaching is tributary. Firmly believed, it is enough to begin with, and, intelligently held, it gives harmony and perspective to all revealed truth. Therefore the inquiry, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God?" is properly and scientifically placed at the very beginning of the Christian life. A confident affirmation here will put all else in a way to be set right. It is purely a matter of will, however, and any one can halt who will; but he who rejects can not even begin, for the divinity of Christ is the only conclusion that will explain all known facts.

The reasons assigned by men for believing Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour of our race, are called Christian evidences. What has been useful to others may be helpful to us, and may, through us, be used to establish the faith of our fellow-men. Therefore a lesson on kinds of evidence is introduced here.

The Gospel of John was written, we are informed by its author (John 20: 31), that readers "may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and that, believing, they might have life in his name. To this record, then, we may confidently go for the beginning of our investigations.

We will examine several witnesses, who, significantly enough, testify in the early part of the book.

1. *John the Baptist.* This man introduced Jesus as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29), and tells why he believed in him. He says:

> "And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And *I have seen,* and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (John 1: 33, 34).

This is evidence No. 1—*the testimony of the physical senses.* John the apostle refers to it when he says:

> "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which *we beheld,* and *our hands handled,* concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and *we have seen* and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)" (1 John 1: 1, 2).

No one living to-day can bear such testimony concerning Jesus, any more than can any one concerning Julius Cæsar or George Washington, but we do not therefore reject His character and claims, any more than we do those of the renowned men of history.

2. *Andrew and another of John's disciples.* These men "followed Jesus" for the reason given in the following passage:

> "Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus" (John 1: 35-37).

This is evidence No. 2—*the testimony of reputable and well-qualified witnesses.* Knowing John's integrity and knowing that he had had every opportunity to know Jesus, they accepted his testimony without hesitation, and acted upon it. This kind of evidence we have in the four Gospel records. It is evidence of the most common and most reliable kind, such as we accept and proceed upon every day in all the affairs of life.

3. *Philip.* He became a disciple, and a seeker of others, on invitation of Jesus himself (John 1: 43). We have no record of their conversation, but Philip himself gives us a clue, when he approaches Nathanael with these words:

> "We have found him, *of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets,* wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1: 45).

This is evidence No. 3—*the testimony of authentic records, history and prophecy.* This kind of evidence we have also, and in even greater measure, for the New Testament and all subsequent history have been added to what Philip had.

4. *Nathanael.* A devout man by nature, evidently, Nathanael had an interview with Christ, part of which was as follows:

"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith to him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee underneath the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these" (John 1:47-50).

This is evidence No. 4—*the testimony of consciousness.*

What brought conviction to Nathanael? It was the inner sense of an instructed heart. This comes to each soul that seeks fellowship with the Lord, and comes to know him. It is an individual assurance for Christians, and comes as a result of right thinking and right living. It is in harmony with the Lord's later statement, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

Here there are four kinds of evidence bearing witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. All save one of them we have to-day, and in addition we have such evidence as can be adduced from the growth and progress of Christianity itself. The evidence then accessible was a sufficient ground for faith among sensible and well-informed people. It has lost nothing with the passage of years. It is sufficient to-day. In succeeding lessons, these sources of evidence will be studied separately.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Why, in religious progress, are we left to "walk by faith, and not by sight"? Is faith an important factor in every-day affairs?

2. Do Christianity and its claims give offense to the thoughtful? What of the claim made by some, that they can not accept the superhuman events of the Gospels?

3. Show the position of Jesus in the whole revelation of God, so as to bring out the meaning of his words to Peter in Matt. 16: 17.

4. How answer the person who refuses all testimony save that of his own senses? Can he know certainly of any past event?

5. For debate: "*Resolved*, That the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God are established by satisfactory testimony;" or, "*Resolved*, That it requires no greater act of faith to embrace Christianity, than to enter upon any other important course of life;" or, "*Resolved*, That something more than the simple confession found in Matt. 16: 16 should be required of those desiring to become Christians to-day." (The last question is thus put to give the protesting side the advantage of an affirmative position.)

LESSON VII. THE TESTIMONY OF COMPETENT WITNESSES

1. *The number chosen to bear special testimony.* When Jesus lived, it was a rule already well established and held without question among the Jews, that "in the mouths of two or three witnesses shall a thing be established" (Deut. 19: 6; Matt. 18: 16). Three was the maximum number required. Seven was the number denoting fullness (Matt. 18: 21, 22), so that, had Jesus chosen to substantiate his claims by seven witnesses, he would have been unquestionably secure. But

he went beyond this and chose from his disciples twelve, whom he named apostles (Mark 3: 13-19).

2. *The qualification of these men for their work.* The twelve were to be "witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). The principle involved was clearly understood, for after the ascension, when about to select a successor to Judas, they were careful that both candidates selected should be "from among those that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us . . . to become a witness with us of the resurrection" (Acts 1: 22).

(1) The opportunity they had to know. These men were definitely chosen to be witnesses. They were constantly in His presence in closest relations for three years. In some instances of special importance, where, for reasons, the entire company could not be present, three, the greatest number usually required to establish an event, were taken with him.

a. The transfiguration (Matt. 17: 1, 2).

b. Raising the dead (Mark 5: 35-43).

c. Agony in the garden (Matt. 26: 36, 37).

(2) The kind of men they were. They were simple-hearted, honest men of the world; men "of the earth, earthy," who, though unsuspicious by nature, would be slowest to believe an unlikely thing and hardest to impose upon. There is no reason to think the fact of his virgin birth was known to any of them. There are good reasons why it would not be noised abroad by the few who knew it. He gave them no hint as to who he was. Some of them, indeed, were skeptical of the real truth at the very close of his stay on earth. His plan was to go on with his work, leaving his apostles to reach their own conclusions. This they did by processes most natural. When plain men, with every opportunity to know the facts, calmly consider a cause for three years and are then ready to die for it, they may be accounted competent witnesses.

3. *The nature and extent of their testimony.* We are not to conclude that these were the only witnesses competent to testify in the first decades of the church. Doubtless there were hundreds who had knowledge of what transpired (1 Cor. 15: 6), but the chosen ones were *official witnesses*, as it were, chosen for this very purpose. Nor would we expect them to bear witness, all of them, in the same manner. They did all testify by word of mouth; some of them added powerful public discourse; others went before rulers, kings and Gentiles; two of them—Peter and Paul*—labored so abundantly that their familiar and oft-delivered testimony was written down by companions in work; and two others—Matthew and John—left accounts of their own, these records being preserved to us to this day.

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*Paul was not one of the twelve, but a distinguished Jew, chosen by the Lord and qualified by a vision for the work he was to do. There is some discussion as to whether Matthias was recognized as an apostle, though "the twelve" are referred to after his selection, some insisting that the action of the apostles was ill advised and unauthorized, and that Jesus chose Paul to complete the twelve.

The purpose of our present lesson is to consider the testimony of these witnesses. We find that we have from them the public oral testimony to the Jews of that age, the special testimony to the peoples of other nations and countries, and the written testimony for all ages and nations.

I. The Public Oral Testimony to the People of That Age.

1. *Delivered first on Pentecost*, fifty days after the crucifixion, the whole twelve having part, and Jews of "every nation under heaven" being present. The result was that three thousand, among whom were some who aided in the crucifixion, were convinced (Luke 24: 45-49; Acts 2: 1-47).

2. *Presented repeatedly in the temple*, with the result that the number was increased to five thousand, and "a great company of priests" became disciples (Acts 4: 4; 6: 7).

3. *Sounded out boldly* by various members of the apostolic band *at every opportunity*, both public and private (Acts 4: 8-12; 4: 33; 5: 22-32, 42; 26: 19-23).

4. *So general* had been the stir created at the time *that Paul dared remind Agrippa*, years later, *that he could not be ignorant of the facts* as there made known (Acts 26: 24-26).

II. The Special Testimony to the Gentile Peoples.

1. *A messenger was selected*, and specially qualified for this important trust (Acts 9: 15, 16; 26: 16). Note that the Lord said to Paul, "For to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness." It was for this, and not to convert him, that the vision was given. Paul accepted Christ as others had done (Acts 22: 16; Rom. 6: 4).

2. *This apostle* was *sent* to his work *by direction of the Spirit* (Acts 13: 2), the eunuch at Antioch, the first Gentile congregation, having the matter in hand.

3. *His testimony* was often *given before men of note*, and in great centers of life and learning (Acts 13: 9-12; 23: 1; 24: 10; 25: 9-12; 26: 1-32). Before Sergius Paulus (Acts 13: 9-12), before Felix (Acts 24: 24, 25), at Athens (Acts 17: 16), at Corinth (Acts 18: 1), before Agrippa (Acts 26: 1-32), before Cæsar (?) (Acts 25: 9-12; 17: 16), at Ephesus (Acts 19: 1), and Rome (Acts 28: 30). But he labored also with many groups of Jews (Acts 28: 17) and with the lowliest of mankind (Philem. 10, 20).

4. It was *Paul's program*—

(1) To testify first to the Jew and then to the Gentile (Acts 13: 44-46; 18: 5, 6).

(2) To go to the farthest portions of the earth (Rom. 1: 13-15; 15: 28).

(3) To preach the gospel where it had not yet been heard (Rom. 15: 18-20).

III. The Written Testimony for All Ages and Nations.

1. *James, Peter and John*, the favored three, have left written testimony, invaluable to the faith, while the Gospel of Matthew and the writings of Paul are equally important. Two of our Gospel records, Mark and Luke, though penned by others, are really the testimony, respectively, of Peter and Paul, so that we may say that five of the

men appointed to the work of testimony have given us testimony in permanent form. This, too, at a time when writing was an unusual accomplishment.

2. *These records are not alike.*

(1) The incidents related are not the same; for example, only one miracle of our Lord appears in the four accounts given. Being written at different times, they do not cover the same ground. Coming from different men, they do not present the same view. Called out by different circumstances, they do not aim at the same end. Though unlike, they harmonize perfectly, greater the wonder of it.

(2) There are apparent discrepancies and disagreements in the New Testament writers. At first glance, these often seem to indicate error and weakness. Careful study shows them to be only apparent, thus confirming faith, for, if written by deceivers, discrepancies would have been avoided; certainly no *apparent* ones would have been left. In their differences, the witnesses agree. It is a remarkable fact that the very things urged against the Bible as a revelation from God are, in nearly every case, its best credentials when thoughtfully considered. The fact that room is left for unbelief and ground given for faith, makes the Bible a test of character—just what God designed it to be.

3. *Absence of design.* It is not clear that the New Testament writers had any idea of the value that would be placed upon their writings in after ages. They wrote, as in the case of Luke and Paul, because others were writing or because circumstances made writing necessary. Yet these chance writings of plain men have been marvelously kept and are ten thousand times more precious to the race than any other records known to mankind. Such is the apostolic testimony. Wonderful and significant as are these few facts about it, this mass of evidence can not be appreciated until it is studied in detail and as a whole. This requires perfect candor and patient study. It is easier to condemn it without a hearing, than to give it deserved consideration, and, as many are inclined by disposition to live in violation of its teachings, this course is too often taken. But woe to the man who, having ever heard of "The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," stops short of giving careful consideration to its claims. He has stood irresolute at the door of life, listening to the call from on high, but failing to enter in until the opportunity is gone.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Five-minute talk on "When is a thing proven?" "What kinds of evidence are we willing to receive in matters of every-day life?"

2. "Is there any advantage gained by having four Gospel records rather than one, and why?"

3. "Have the New Testament writings been preserved by divine care?"

4. Prepare and give a brief essay upon Matthew's Gospel. (Any good teacher's Bible or commentary will furnish the facts needed.)

5. Make a list of evidences offered by John in his Gospel.

6. For debate: "*Resolved*, That the written records of our Lord's life are all that could be expected, or desired, as an aid to faith and life."

LESSON VIII. THE TESTIMONY OF AUTHENTIC RECORDS

For those who saw the Lord face to face and witnessed his works, no other testimony was needed to prove that he was more than a mere man. They, with John the Baptist, could say, "I have seen . . . that this is the Son of God."

Many, of course, even of that land and that time, were not privileged to so learn of Him. Such would find evidence, wholly reliable, in the verbal testimony of his personal associates.

But Jesus Christ was a *world Saviour.* His vision beheld a time when "this gospel of the kingdom" should be preached among all nations. Some provision must be made, therefore, that those who might live in after ages would be able to know the truth about him. This was done, as we shall see, in such manner that all who will, may believe, and may have life in his name.

The New Testament records are authentic. The subject can not be treated properly in small space, but we submit here a passage from 'Evidences of Christianity," by J. W. McGarvey, in which three master minds give their conclusions, after having studied the subject exhaustively:

> In the language of Dr. Davidson, "No new doctrines have been elicited by the aid of Biblical criticism, nor have any historical facts been summoned by it from obscurity. All the doctrines and duties of Christianity remain unaffected;" and in the still more specific language of Dr. Hort, "The books of the New Testament, as preserved in extant documents, assuredly speak to us in every important respect in language identical with that in which they spoke to those for whom they were originally written." If these statements are true, as they undoubtedly are, then all the authority and value possessed by these books when they were first written belong to them still. The case is like that of a certain will. A gentleman left a large estate entailed to his descendants of the third generation, and it was not to be divided until a majority of them should be of age. During the interval many copies of the will were circulated among parties interested, many of these being copies of copies. In the meantime, the office of record in which the original was filed was burned with all its contents. When the time for division drew near, a prying attorney gave out among the heirs the report that no two existing copies of the will were alike. This alarmed them all and set them busily at work to ascertain the truth of the report. On comparing copy with copy, they found the report true, but on close inspection it was discovered that the differences consisted in errors of spelling or grammatical construction; some mistakes in figures corrected by the written numbers; and some other differences not easily accounted for; but that in none of the copies did these mistakes affect the rights of the heirs. In the essential matters for which the will was written, the representations of all the copies were precisely the same. The result was that they divided the estate with perfect satisfaction to all, and they were more certain that they had executed the will of their grandfather than if the original copy had been alone preserved, for it might have been tampered with in the interest of a single heir, but the copies, defective though they were, could not have been. So with the New Testament. The discovery of errors in the copies excited alarm leading to inquiry, which developed the fact that he who has the most imperfect copy has in it all the original contained of doctrine, duty and privilege.

We are influenced greatly by what men competent to judge of the merits of a question may think. It is in place therefore to present the following quotations from men prominent for intellectual ability:

> John Adams: "The Bible is the best book in the world."
> John Quincy Adams: "I have for many years made it a practice to read

through the Bible once every year; it is an inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue."

Queen Victoria: "This Book is the secret of England's greatness."

Andrew Jackson: "That Book, sir, is the rock on which our republic rests."

James K. Polk: "I have read the sacred Scriptures a great deal, and deeply reverence them as divine truth."

Thomas Erskine: "No man ever existed who was more impressed than I am with the truth of everything connected with the Christian faith."

James A. Garfield: "No man can understand the history of any nation or of the world who does not recognize in it the power of God, and behold his stately goings forth as he walks among the nations."

Senator John Sherman: "I appreciate the Bible as the highest gift of God to man. It is the assurance that our life does not end with death, and is the strongest incentive to honorable and charitable deeds."

Heinrich Heine: "What a Book! Vast and wide as the world, rooted in the abysses of creation, and towering up behind the blue secrets of heaven. Sunrise and sunset, promise and fulfillment, birth and death, the whole drama of humanity, all in this Book."

Justice David J. Brewer: "No book contains more truths or is more worthy of confidence than the Bible, for none brings more comfort to the sorrowing, more strength to the weak, or more stimulus to the nobly ambitious; none makes life sweeter or death easier or less sad."

Ulysses S. Grant: "Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet-anchor to your liberties. Write its precepts in your hearts and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this Book we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization, and to this we must look as our guide in the future."

I. The Four Gospels. The faith of the apostles rested on *facts about a person.* By these they knew the person, and in knowing the person was life eternal (John 14: 9; 17: 3).

Naturally, then, the one aim of those who bear testimony will be to set forth the facts that will best present the person. This could not have been done in a way more convincing than is adopted by the four "Evangelists," Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Let us note

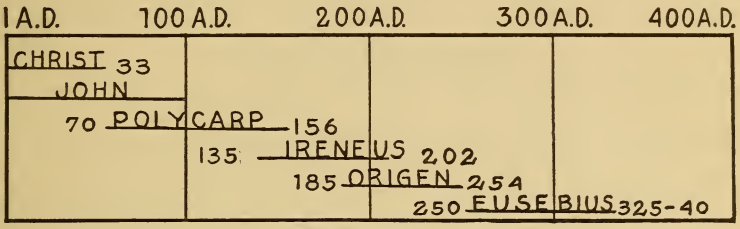
1. *The style of these narratives.* The most stupendous deeds ever known to men are related by eye-witnesses and others but a step removed, without a word of embellishment, a single attempt at emphasis or any show of personal feeling. Facts, facts, facts everywhere is the program followed by all. They do not all tell of the same facts, nor all of them alike when they do, but the one ambition of each narrator is to set forth the bare account of "all that Jesus began both to do and teach."

2. *The fourfold presentation.* To realize the advantage of this, we have but to reflect on the gain to us, in ascertaining the facts about any important matter, of having the testimony of two eye-witnesses rather than of one, and the additional assistance of two other reliable men who had had the advantage of personal converse with many other eye-witnesses. The very fact of having four accounts has made interest in the study of the Lord's life perennial. The composite picture thus obtained is never the same to two individuals, and never twice the same to one individual.

(1) The writers, two of them, Matthew and John, were of the twelve; the other two, Mark and Luke, were intimate associates, assistants often, perhaps, of Peter and Paul, respectively, in their apostolic labors.

(2) Authenticity. The oldest manuscripts we have go back to the fourth century (?). There are catalogues of the books that were in

use and commonly accepted by the church in A. D. 160-170, showing the canon to have been substantially the same then as now. The writings of early Christians still preserved quote freely from all New Testament books, giving additional proof of the place then given them. Enemies of the Bible, such as Celsus, and the heathen writer Lucian, in opposing the teachings of Christianity, have preserved such portions of the Scriptures as to prove that the New Testament we have is almost identical with the sacred writings in the second century. (See chart showing how the lives of eminent disciples of the early church overlapped, and how easily transmission even of oral truth would have been.)



(3) Characteristics. In Matthew, we see Jesus the Lawgiver, fulfilling Jewish prophecy; in Mark, the Worker, challenging Roman love of power and prowess; in Luke, the Friend, descending from Adam and helping humanity. Bernard has said:

> As the Book of Acts shows us three stages in the outward progress of the gospel—first, within the bounds of Judaism; then, in the work of St. Peter, spreading beyond those limits, in the Roman direction; and finally, in the ministry of St. Paul, delivered freely and fully to all the world—so do the synoptic Gospels, as they stand in the canon, correspond with a singular fitness to these three periods.

We may go a step further, and say that in John we see the Saviour common to us all, and the Redeemer *of a world* from sin.

3. *Design.* That four witnesses, writing separately, and as moved by circumstances and disposition, should join in the presentation of a testimony so uniform and so admirably designed for the purpose in view by each one separately (see Luke 1: 1-4; John 20: 30, 31), is surely not without design. But they were innocent of any attempt to agree with each other, as is evidenced by many *apparent* discrepancies. What mind planned this testimony then, and preserved it through the ages?

II. The Acts. It has been suggested that this book might properly be called "Some of the acts of some of the apostles and some other people." From a human viewpoint, this might seem to be more accurately descriptive of its contents, but another view presents it as the acts of Jesus Christ in the early history of his church. With this conception of the book, let us see what confidence it may awaken.

1. *The Author.* He represents himself as one who had already prepared a record of "the things that Jesus began both to do and teach" (Acts 1: 1). Paul refers to him as "the beloved physician." His use of "we" (see Acts 27: 1) shows that he was at times a companion of

Paul in his travels. He was closely associated with eye-witnesses of Jesus' "mighty works," and knew of many who had prepared written accounts of his life. What more could be required of one who would give account of an important matter?

2. *The Book.*

(1) It presents the things we *need* to know, omitting the things we would *like* to know. For example, it tells every important fact about Jesus Christ, and gives every step in the plan of salvation, illustrated by hundreds of conversions, but it does not record any detail of the personal life of any one of the apostles, though these would be very interesting to readers now.

(2) It tells of differences and disagreements between apostles and brethren, never speaking a word of praise or condemnation of any.

(3) It covers the age of supernormal manifestations, beginning with the outpouring of the Spirit at Jerusalem and ending with the advent of Paul to Rome after the gospel had been preached "in all the world," "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his will" (Heb. 2: 4).

(4) It fills a distinct place. It connects the Gospels and the Epistolary writings. It shows how the apostles sent out by our Lord (Matt. 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16) directed the gospel enterprise, forming churches to which the later Scripture writings were directed.

III. The Epistles.

1. *Authorship.* These were written, with the exception possibly of two, by apostles. Since Paul traveled extensively, forming churches in many cities, he, more than any other, would have occasion to give instruction and direction by means of the written page. And so it happens that fourteen of the New Testament letters are from his pen.

2. *Content.* The problems and difficulties of one age differ from those of another, but the principles involved are always the same. Though the particular problems of Paul's time have passed away, in large part, no difficulty is experienced in applying his teachings to perplexities of our time.

(1) His rule for the eating of meat offered to idols settles the question of a moderate use of intoxicating liquor (1 Cor. 8: 11-13).

(2) The principle set forth in his letter sent by a slave to his master has banished slavery in every civilized nation (Philem. 15, 16).

(3) The direction given to the Corinthian brethren as to the proper course when a serious evil became manifest in the church will serve in any such case to-day (1 Cor. 5: 1-13).

3. *Harmony.* The marvelous harmony of these writings with all they touch has often been overlooked.

(1) Doctrinally they harmonize with the Gospels in every particular, being an application of the principles of Jesus to human lives.

(2) Historically they are "dovetailed" into Acts in a manner so intricate, and yet so accurate, that not even the most careful comparison could have produced, yet there is little to indicate that either Luke or the apostolic writers were even aware of one another's work.

(3) Prophetically certain utterances coincide exactly with portions of the Revelation. (See 1 Thess. 2: 3-12; 2 Tim. 3: 1-9.) These words

are from Peter and Paul, too, and not from John, who wrote Revelation. Taken together, the references to the future harmonizing as they do with the symbolic predictions of the Revelation, these prophetic utterances afford a picture of the Romish perversions and corruptions of other centuries that can not but awaken wonder and reverence.

IV. The Revelation. Though not agreeing in their interpretation of this book, all careful students give united testimony as to its majesty of vision and its accuracy of illustration in portraying "the things which shall come to pass hereafter."

The New Testament is its own best defense. Almost without exception, those who question its authenticity have not given it a fair and impartial hearing, while those who have read it with greatest care hold it in highest honor.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Five-minute talk on the distinctive peculiarities of the first three Gospels.
2. Five-minute summing-up of the evidences of Christianity as presented in the Gospel of John.
3. Discuss briefly the place and importance of the Book of Acts.
4. Which is the most practical of the Epistles? Which the most logical? Which the most beautiful?
5. Repeat from memory several of the testimonies of great men to the worth of the Bible.

LESSON IX. THE TESTIMONY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Reverting to former studies, we recall that John the Baptist was convinced by *what he saw*, Andrew by *what John said* of Jesus, and Philip by the *fulfillment* in Jesus' life *of what "Moses, in the law and the prophets, wrote."* There was another (Nathanael) who confessed the divine sonship of Jesus, evidently basing his decision on the Lord's insight into his own inner life (John 1: 47-49).

We have allowed these four examples, standing as they do at the beginning of John's Gospel, to direct the course of our studies in evidence. Thus far we have considered three kinds of testimony—that of the physical senses, which Jesus gave to his apostles; that of verbal witness, which the apostles delivered to their hearers; and that of authentic records, left by those who had definite information from unquestionable sources. We come now to the fourth kind of evidence; *i. e.*, that of consciousness. We shall find it different from the others, but, in its place, not less important.

In our day a something called "Christian consciousness" is being substituted for the teachings of the word of God. The error of thus exalting "consciousness" above revelation is an old one, and one full of grave danger to faith as it is in Christ. A careful consideration of the purpose and limitations of consciousness will therefore be necessary.

I. What the Testimony of Consciousness is Not.

1. *Alone, it is not a safe guide in matters of life and conduct.* Reason and the Scriptures serve this purpose. To expect special, divine "leadings and drawings" in matters for which the human faculties of

reason and judgment are designed, is to court confusion. Some of the most dangerous errors and delusions of all time have risen from this very source.

2. *It presents no new truth.* To notice carefully the case before us, Nathanael had already been informed that Jesus was the one promised by Moses; but he would think Philip might be mistaken. The personal meeting assured him that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, and caused him to confess it. The facts of the gospel as presented to-day are exactly like other facts. They are to be weighed and investigated by the same means. To those who follow their leadings, there comes a deepened conviction that they are true. Can any one tell of a religious truth born out of consciousness; *i. e.*, one not found in the Scriptures? Teachers of new truth from God show "signs" as an evidence that God is with them (John 3: 1, 2).

3. *It is not for the disobedient and irreverent.* It comes of doing the Father's will and honoring him daily. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching," said the Master. Jesus reminded Nathanael of a scene under a fig tree (John 1: 48-50), and we can well believe the reference is to some act of devotion or service, of which others were not aware. "Blessed are the pure in heart." Why? "For they shall see God." They do see him, perceive him, and understand him, in a way impossible to those whose inner life is polluted with the guile of worldliness. (Read 1 John 2: 3.)

4. *It is not to be used as an evidence to others.* The apostles, speaking out of consciousness, could say, "I know," or, "I know and am persuaded," but their feelings and assurances were never presented as evidence to others. They had *facts* to be used for this purpose.

II. What the Testimony of Consciousness Is.

1. *It is a source of strength to the individual disciple.* The gospel enlists all who will respond, in a terrific conflict with doubt and evil. The wonder of it is that so many do so well. To all who sincerely obey him, God sends his Spirit into their hearts, whereby they cry, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8: 9-17). In every fierce struggle and every sore trial, this consciousness of God's presence and care is a source of strength. By that Spirit—*i. e.*, the Spirit that confesses Christ within —we overcome the world (1 John 5: 5).

2. *It is an incentive to service.* To illustrate: A farmer hears of a new product said to be profitable. He believes it just enough to try an acre or two. The yield is good, and the price high. He increases his acreage with profits proportionately increased. He at once gives his entire attention to it, and urges the same course upon his neighbors —to "taste and see that it is good." Consciousness that Jesus is the Christ, and our Saviour, converts fishermen and tax-gatherers into eloquent advocates and evangelists, and persecutors into preachers of the cross.

3. *It is susceptible of constant growth.* In every calling. men who love their work become more competent and more enthusiastic as time passes. This is the result of growth in knowledge and experience. In all human enterprise, limitations are set, but not in the Christian life. There are depths and heights there that man can never reach. Even death, that comes to interrupt all earthly pursuits, is no bar to prog-

ress and holy living. We are sons now, and it "doth not yet appear what we shall be." God gives to those who obey and serve him here a measure of his Spirit, as an earnest of what is to be. When these bodies fail us, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then "shall we see eye to eye and know also as we are known." Until then, "Christian consciousness" or the "answer of a good conscience toward God" will be for the comfort and assurance of those who follow the Lord.

III. Consciousness and Faith.

1. *Consciousness is determined by information.* In no case can one come to have convictions or to exercise a conscience on a subject of which he is ignorant. Consciousness is not a light shining from within, but an inner illumination or reflection of a light that shines from without.

2. *Observation is an aid to consciousness.* A thing may appeal to the mind as plausible; a system of teaching may appear to be altogether reasonable and acceptable, so as to elicit intellectual assent to its correctness. When we see it in operation, however, and see that its results are all that could be desired, its merit gets a new grip on our confidence.

3. *Experience is the natural ground of consciousness.* It is impossible for one to have a deep and abiding confidence or conviction except as it may grow out of experience. It takes action, added to mere belief, to bring personal assurance. Back of action, however, is a primary faith always, else there would have been no action. To say, as some in our day do, "I accept the Bible because I accept Christ," or, "I believe in the miracles because I believe in Christ," is to flirt with a delusion. But for the Bible, how would we know Christ? but for the New Testament, how learn of his miracles? First of all, we accept a simple record of events; these incite us to action, and action produces a consciousness or conviction, which in itself becomes a new assurance.

4. *Inward conviction is the result of faith, rather than the cause of it.* There is confusion in some minds at this point. James Freeman Clarke, the great Unitarian, said, "I believe the Bible because it finds me and feeds me." The utterance has had many echoes in the last twenty years. It is so guileless in the appeal it makes that the subtle error it contains is apt to be overlooked. One's faith in the Bible may be confirmed by the application of its precepts to his life, and God may become more real to those who serve him, but faith precedes this. One exercises faith before the Bible "finds and feeds" him, and before he feels the conviction born of service, else the Bible would neither find nor feed.

Consciousness is an important factor in every successful Christian life. Baptism is "the answer of a good conscience toward God," or, as the Revision has it, "the interrogation of a good conscience toward God." Paul appealed to the fact that he had "lived before God in all good conscience," and John said, "Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, we have boldness toward God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight."

Subjects for Discussion

1. Debate: "*Resolved*, That it is unsafe to be guided wholly by our feelings in any matter."

2. Did the apostles and Biblical writers speak out of their own "inner consciousness" and sense of right, or had they other guidance? (See John 14: 26 and Heb. 1: 1.)

3. To what extent may conscience be made a guide in matters of conduct?

4. Is it safe to assume that we are right when we feel right?

5. Cite instances where men acting conscientiously were wrong.

LESSON X. THE TESTIMONY OF PROPHECY

It is beyond human power to foretell the future. This is so well recognized that no more convincing evidence of the presence of a superhuman intelligence can be offered than the actual and accurate delineation of events and developments before they have taken place. (Read Deut. 18: 20-22; Matt. 26: 33, 34, 75; Luke 24: 6-9.) For the thoughtful mind, this line of evidence is more convincing than any other. But it requires *thoughtful* consideration to be appreciated to the full. Our closing study on evidence will be devoted to this important subject. We can not do more in the time and space here available than to fairly introduce a line of investigation which, it is hoped, many will feel inclined to pursue further.*

The divinity of Christ is the vital point of all Christian evidence. If he holds his place as the Son of God, no storm can shake the system of which he is the center. If his claims prove to be false, the whole structure will fall of its own weight. The facts most important, therefore, the doctrines most vital and the prophecies most interesting are those which bear directly on the personality of Jesus Christ. Who was he? Will his claims bear investigation? This inquiry we will hold in mind as we take up our study of prophecy.

I. General Prophetic References to a Coming One.

1. *The seed of the woman.*

"And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:14, 15).

2. *The seed of Abraham.*

"Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3). "And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 26:4).

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*To those who would make a more extended investigation, the little book "Keith on Prophecy," which any bookdealer can furnish, will be invaluable.

3. *The tribe of Judah—the "sceptre"—the "ruler's staff"—"Shiloh" and the "obedience of the peoples."*

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh come; And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be" (Gen. 49:10).

4. *The Prophet "like unto Moses."*

"I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18:18, 19).

[This passage quoted by Stephen, Acts 7: 37, and applied to Christ.]

5. *The "righteous Branch."*

"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness" (Jer. 23:5, 6).

6. *The suffering Servant who would give justice and light to the Gentiles.*

"Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench: he will bring forth justice in truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house" (Isa. 42:1-4, 6, 7).

7. *The Sun of righteousness.*

"But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings; and ye shall go forth, and gambol as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I make, saith Jehovah of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come" (Mal. 4:2-5).

These are but a few of the many prophecies of a most interesting kind. They have been called redundant or rebounding prophecies. They offer such assurance of immediate benefits as would aid Israel in her then-present struggles, but each one has a further and more important application not satisfied by any temporary triumph or prosperity. Such predictions have greater weight, often, than direct and specific foretellings. To illustrate: Children who receive valuable gifts at Christmas-time, if they can recall a series of vague and, at the time, mysterious remarks made by their parents, will easily decide from whom their presents come. The promises of a coming One are so woven into the fabric of the Old Testament, and, when studied in the light of our Lord's life, stand forth with a distinctness so surprisingly vivid, that the heart says at once: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote."

II. Specific Prophecies Touching the Life of Our Lord. These are

numerous also, and we can consider but a very few of them. It will be well to group them for convenience in study, and as an aid to memory. The following classification will serve:

1. *As to His birth.**

(1) The place is foretold—Mic. 5: 2; Matt. 2: 1.

(2) To be born of a virgin—Isa. 7: 14; Luke 1: 26-33; 2: 4-7.

(3) Great men to bow to Him—Ps. 72: 10, 15; Matt. 2: 1-11.

(4) Innocents to be slaughtered—Jer. 31: 15; Matt. 2: 16-18.

2. *As to His life and work.*

(1) Preceded by "Elijah"—Isa. 40: 3 and Mal. 3: 5; Matt. 3: 1-3 and Matt. 11: 11-14.

(2) Anointed with the Holy Spirit—Isa. 11: 1, 2; Mark 1: 10, 11.

(3) To preach to the people—Isa. 61: 1-3; Luke 4: 16-18.

(4) To speak in parables—Ps. 78: 1, 2; Matt. 13: 34, 35.

(5) To perform miracles—Isa. 35: 3-6; Luke 7: 18-23.

(6) To be a stone of stumbling—Isa. 8: 14, 15; Rom. 9: 30-32.

(7) Despised and rejected—Isa. 53: 3; Acts 8: 32-35.

3. *As to His death.*

(1) To be betrayed by a friend—Ps. 41: 9; John 13: 21-30.

(2) Sold for thirty pieces of silver—Zech. 11: 12, 13; Matt. 26: 14-16.

(3) Rulers unite against Him—Ps. 2: 1-4; Luke 23: 11, 12.

(4) Mocked and taunted—Ps. 22: 6-8; Matt. 27: 39-44.

(5) To be given vinegar to drink—Ps. 69: 21; Matt. 27: 33, 34.

(6) Lots cast for His garments—Ps. 22: 18; Matt. 27: 35.

(7) No bone of His body broken—Ps. 34: 20 and Ex. 12: 43-46; John 19: 32-36 and 1 Cor. 5: 7.

(8) With the wicked and the rich in His death—Isa. 53: 9; Luke 23: 33, 50-54.

(9) His flesh did not see corruption—Ps. 16: 8-10; Acts 2: 31.

(10) The resurrection—Ps. 30: 1-3; Luke 24: 45-47.

(11) His law to go forth from "Zion"—Isa. 2: 1-3; Luke 24: 46-49.

III. Prophetic Utterances of Jesus and His Apostles. It is a somewhat remarkable fact that John the Baptist performed no miracles (John 10: 41). Prophet though he was (for Jesus rated him as first among them all), he had *no new truth to impart.* Miracles serve as evidence to his own generation that a teacher is sent of God (John 3: 1, 2). In so far as the miracle is properly vouched for, as are those of the New Testament, it deepens the faith of all who come after, also, but prophecy—the foretelling of future events—as will be readily seen, serves this purpose even better than miracle. It would be strange, therefore, if the prophetic element was not present in the work of Jesus Christ, and those who, after his departure, carried his work on to completion. Though not usually received at full value, this evidence is given among others.

A few instances may be noted:

1. *His own death foretold.*

"From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go

*First reference in each case is prophecy and the second fulfillment.

unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up" (Matt. 16:21).

The effect upon his disciples when this prediction was fulfilled may be seen from Matt. 28: 6-10:

"He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said: Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

2. *His veiled prophecy concerning His body.*

"The Jews therefore answered and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews therefore said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (John 2:18-21).

3. *His reference to the wrecking of the temple and the destruction of Jerusalem.*

"And Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on his way; and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:1, 2).

This remark led to questionings by the disciples, with the result that in a discourse (Matt. 24 and 25) he depicted the fate of the Jewish people and Jerusalem, their chief city. (See Matt. 24: 15-28. This whole passage should be carefully read and details noted.) All of this came to pass literally, in a few decades from the time when it was spoken. The period culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem, A. D. 70, was one of almost constant turmoil, battle and bloodshed. Tacitus says of it: "It was full of calamities, horrible with battles, rent with seditions, savage in peace itself." The Jewish persecutions were followed by those indescribable perpetrations of the monster Nero. The Jewish war with Rome began in A. D. 66 and lasted about five years. The whole empire was full of commotion. Nero was overthrown by Galba, Galba was defeated by Otho, Otho was conquered by Vitellius, and Vitellius gave place to Vespasian. All of these but one suffered violent deaths. The Roman army, intent upon subduing the rebellious Jews, surrounded Jerusalem in 67. There was a temporary repulse before the final siege was begun. This was the signal our Lord had indicated, and faithful Jewish Christians fled to Pella, beyond Jordan, and were saved. The description of Josephus of what followed is startingly like the prediction of our Lord. So great was the suffering from hunger that women cooked and ate their own children. Jewish forces within the city fought with each other, and wild bands of maddened men pillaged houses, showing no regard for property, honor, virtue or life. On August 10, A. D. 70, the city was stormed, and there was universal massacre. Over a million persons perished, and one

hundred thousand survivors were sold into slavery. Thus ended the national life of the Jews, the closing scenes giving added meaning to our Lord's words:

"What then is this that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner? Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust" (Luke 20:17, 18).

4. *The prophecy of the "falling away."*

"Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand; let no man beguile you in any wise: for *it will not be,* except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God" (2 Thess. 2:1-4).

"But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:1-5).

These two passages present an accurate portrait of Roman Catholic perversions of the simple gospel as they have been growing for centuries, and as they exist to-day.

5. *The Revelation on Patmos.* This book is a panorama, presenting in exalted language and awe-inspiring symbolism the conflict of truth with error, and the final victory. It is as yet a veiled book. Perhaps, once the church has completed her journey through the wilderness way, the veil will be lifted.

What has been here presented is scarcely an introduction to the prophecies of the Biblical records, but it will serve to indicate a rich vein which, the more it is worked, the more its precious contents will be valued.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Why is the study of prophecy of such value in our day? Why is it more convincing than to read of miracles being performed?

2. Is there any way in which man can know the future? (Read Jas. 4:14. Also Deut. 18:21, 22.)

3. Three-minute talk on unmistakable references of the Old Testament to Jesus Christ as revealed in the New.

4. Debate: "*Resolved,* That prophecies veiled for a time, as are many in the Old Testament, are of greater value as evidence, when understood, than if they were plainly given at the first."

5. What value would our Lord's prophecies have to assist his disciples when he had left them?

PART III.

FIVE LESSONS ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH

Lesson XI. The Head of the Church.
Lesson XII. The Seat of Authority in the Church.
Lesson XIII. The Unity and Harmony of the Church.
Lesson XIV. The Christian Congregation.
Lesson XV. Organization for Work.

LESSON XI. THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

No organization or enterprise can succeed without competent control, direction and oversight. Any great business concern, political party or religious body, to succeed, must have a center of authority. The progress of the church, no less than that of any other body of men, will be measured by its headship.

1. The church must have a head, and the right one.

2. The church must know its head and honor Him.

3. The church must keep vital connection with her head and be responsive to His promptings.

I. The Meaning of Headship.

Note.—Primarily the term is taken from the human head, which is over the physical organism. It has come to be used with reference to the one person to whom others of a given body look for direction.

1. *Having authority, the head commands* the members, as in the human body; not arbitrarily, but benevolently and wisely.

2. *Having intelligence, the head directs*, as seen in training of the fingers to play an instrument.

3. *Having wisdom and power, the head protects*—illustrated by quick action of hand to protect eye or of foot to save body from falling.

4. *Having general oversight, the head provides.* The hand or ear informs the head of any pain or discomfort, and intelligent oversight provides a remedy. The head of a business, if a worthy head, is concerned with the welfare of those under his direction.

II. The Headship of Christ in the Early Church.—The headship of the church is a vital matter. Nothing is more demoralizing or confusing than to have to pay allegiance to an unworthy head, or to be in doubt as to who is the rightful head. The position of the Roman Catholic Church is that, after Christ, Peter was appointed the earthly head, and that he in turn chose a successor, and so on down to the present Pope. The morals of the Middle Ages, and the condition of

mankind to-day in Catholic countries, afford a sufficient commentary on this system. Let us note that:

1. *Headship was claimed by Christ* himself (Matt. 16: 16-18; 28: 18-20).

2. *The headship of Christ* was constantly *recognized by the apostles* in their labors (Acts 1: 21-26; 2: 32, 33; 4: 10, 11).

3. The *headship of Christ was exemplified and illustrated* in the writings of the apostles (Eph. 1: 20-22; 5: 23; 2 Pet 1: 17, 18; 1 John 2: 1, 2).

III. The Headship of Christ in the Church To-day.—Who has not had a feeling of far-offness of New Testament events? It would have been easy enough, we feel at such times, to follow Jesus on the paths of Palestine in the day when he did wonderful works and drew great crowds of people. Or it would not have been difficult to keep step in the apostolic group, with signs and wonders to bear witness and tremendous results following every effort. But that was two thousand years ago. This is a workaday world, and no prophet's voice or sign from God has stirred devout spirits in all these centuries. Has the church been so long without direction? Let us see.

The headship of Christ over the church still prevails. After three years of personal training, he gave his apostles, before his departure, a definite promise: "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14: 26). This promise was fulfilled on Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-12), and the apostles entered on their work at once. Their words of teaching were from Christ the head (Acts 2: 32, 33). Their writings are also from God (1 Thess. 2: 13; 1 John 1: 4). Through his word, then,

1. *The authority of Jesus is still supreme.* What Jesus commands, we men must obey without question. We should study his words in the light of the Old Testament Scriptures, since they testify of him; and of subsequent teachings and examples of the apostles, since they were his private pupils and would be sure to have clearer grasp of his meaning than we can have at this distance. His authority is voiced by the apostles and given to us in his "testament," or will (Luke 10: 16).

2. *His intelligence still guides.* He saw through the persecutions of the beginning and the darkness of the Middle Ages, and in faith he prayed for a day when his disciples should be one and the world should believe that he had been sent of God. Toward this glad time his church moves on. Whatever hint we can have from his own words in the Gospels, or from his apostles, will be safe counsel. In times of perplexity and doubt we may have assurance in prayer to God through him.

3. *His power still protects.* Not by miraculous intervention to deliver from prison or shipwreck, as in apostolic days, but by barriers of justice and institutions of mercy, and a thousand other agencies that have grown out of his influence among men. "Godliness is profitable both for the life that now is and for that which is to come."

Illustrations.—A member of the body severed from the head dies. (See John 15: 5, 6.)

If communication be cut off between any member and the head,

even though it be not severed, paralysis results. (See 1 Cor. 11: 27-30.)

The members of the body must work in harmony and co-operate with each other if progress is to be made (1 Cor. 12: 12-31).

To despise the counsels of the head is to invite disaster and loss. What does it mean when soldiers reject the authority of superiors or children refuse to honor parents by obedience? What can be expected if the head of the church be not honored in all things?

Subjects for Discussion

1. A talk giving illustrations of the necessity of there being a head to every concern.

2. The importance of men in the industrial world—on railroads and in factories, for instance—being subject to their superiors.

3. The need of headship in a household or family.

4. The Christian plan. This is the New Testament order. Briefly led by men selected for that purpose, is his body, what of responsibility? Should we not look well to know the mind of our Master and the needs of his work?

LESSON XII. THE SEAT OF AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

The church is represented to us in the New Testament as Christ's body. He is the head whose will is to be carried out by the body. The church is made up of men and women who need direction. The desire for divine and infallible leadership has been felt from the first. In the early church it was customary to submit matters to the Lord whose guidance by the Holy Spirit had been promised. (See John 14: 26; Acts 1: 24-26; 15: 28, 29.) Soon after the close of the apostolic age other means of securing guidance was attempted. They may be studied as follows:

1. *The Papal plan.* The voice of the Pope is the voice of God. He is the earthly head of the church, and, when speaking on matters of church life, he is infallible. This would have been satisfactory *if the Pope had been infallible*, but the Pope was a mere man. He has never been inspired by the Holy Spirit, as the apostles were. Failing here, the whole scheme failed and the Dark Ages was a result of substituting the human for the divine.

2. *The Episcopal plan.* A council duly appointed is clothed with authority and its decrees are final. The voice of the bishops is the voice of God. As the wisdom of many is more dependable than the wisdom of one, so the episcopal is better than the Papal. But the "Historic Episcopate" was made up of men appointed by men, and hence they also fell short of the infallible.

3. *The Democratic plan.* The advent of congregationalism was a great step forward. As the episcopal was an advance over the Papal, the congregational—a further appeal to the wisdom of the many—is an advance from the episcopal. But it is not safe to assert that the "voice of the people is the voice of God," for the people are often wrong. Congregationalism alone is not the solution of the problem. Some questions can not be settled by a popular vote.

4. *The Christian plan.* This is the New Testament order. Briefly stated, it is the oversight and leadership of each congregation by Christ-governed men chosen from their own number. It is God's plan that each man, organization or nation should walk alone as soon as possible. The departures from God's plan of church procedure result from the struggle to do this. The original order is best and should be restored.

The congregation should choose from among them those who, by the rule of the Lord (Matt. 20: 27), are best fitted to be leaders, and among those chosen may be one or more pre-eminently qualified to teach or rule. These take oversight of the local church, "not by constraint, but willingly," and "not as lording it over God's heritage." But these are shepherds in their own flock only, having no authority beyond its borders and no voice only as they may be asked by their brethren to render assistance elsewhere. Naturally enough, there will be questions which it will be wise to refer to the congregation for settlement. Such proposals it may be as extending a call to one to "labor in word and doctrine" in a given locality, or the erection of a meeting-house, or any matter in which, from the nature of the case, all are interested. But such appeal should be made only when necessary, and then with such tact and care that no friction or ill feeling or division will be likely to result.

Having thus considered the plan of procedure for Christian congregations, we may now look more closely into the workings of the congregation itself, which will require supervision and direction.

I. Certain Clearly Defined Limitations are Thrown Around the Church.—A good rule is that where God has spoken, the church must keep silent.

1. *The faith of the church of Christ can not be altered*, even by the church itself. Jesus Christ is its author and *finisher* (Heb. 12: 1, 2). A congregation can meet and determine by vote what its teachings shall be, but if, in any degree, it differs from the teachings of Christ and his apostles, it ceases to be a church of Christ (1 Tim. 3: 15).

2. *The form of government can not be changed.* The model given in the New Testament is as the Lord would have it (1 Cor. 12: 27, 28; Eph. 5: 25-27). Here, again, the church can meet and decide to choose bishops (after the modern idea of bishops), or even a pope, but in so doing it ceases to be simply a church of Christ (Phil. 1: 1).

3. *The standard of righteousness can not be changed.* Jesus Christ is our exemplar (1 Cor. 11: 1; 1 Thess 1: 6), and he is ever the same (Heb. 13: 8). Any congregation can adopt rules of conduct for their membership, but there is no end to such procedure, as standards of conduct vary with different individuals, communities and generations. The church of Christ has one rule: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5: 48).

II. Certain Liberties are Granted the Church.

1. *The congregation has control and direction of its own temporal interests.*

2. *The church may choose and set apart those who are to give themselves wholly to the ministries of the gospel* (Acts 6: 3-6; 13: 1-3).

3. *The church may determine such details of worship as are not*

prescribed in the Scriptures—for example, what song-books are to be used, when and how often the gospel is to be preached, minor details of the Lord's table observance, whether or not musical instruments are to be used, when and for what purpose offerings are to be taken, etc. The church may or may not be uniform in these things. Uniformity may or may not be desirable. Any attempt to compel conformity to a given order in these minor matters may well be regarded as an infringement of liberty granted in the gospel.

4. *The church may determine by what means or method it will advance the interest of the kingdom.* One congregation may support its own minister and evangelist in a given locality, another may share the support of a minister with other congregations. One may send its missionary to the heathen, taking direction of his work and assuming his support; another may have part in such an enterprise in which others share. One church may give largely to the work—local, State or national—while another may turn its energies to another field. One may co-operate with a missionary society in its endeavors, another may see fit to conduct its work in another way. In all this there is the fullest liberty, but things should be done "decently and in order."

5. *The privilege of self-defense is granted the church.* That which is vital to her life is her faith, her unity and her morals. It is within the province of the local church to guard the faith. This the church at Jerusalem did when, in counsel assembled, they sent men to Antioch with a letter from apostles, elders and brethren counseling that things not taught by Christ and the apostles be not required of Gentile Christians (Acts 15: 22-29). This Paul required of the Galatian churches (Gal. 1: 8, 9), and John of the Christians to whom he wrote (1 John 4: 1-3). The church may save herself from those who cause division (Rom. 16: 17, 18) and from open immorality among her members (1 Cor. 5: 1-5).

III. Precaution Should Be Exercised by the Leaders of a Congregation.

1. *The elders and deacons of a congregation should carefully consider every question that is to be submitted to the congregation,* and see that it is presented in the best form and only at a proper meeting.

2. *No opportunity should be given for agitation* among the members or solicitation by interested parties. The thing sought is an expression of the best judgment of each member, and this can best be had when each one is left to decide for himself, with such light as may be given publicly at the open meeting. The circulation of petitions and counter petitions should not be countenanced, nor should one man be pitted against another in the choice of elders or deacons, as such procedure is sure to result in strife without coming at the real desire of the whole body.

3. *Only such matters as concern the whole body should be presented to the church,* and then only at a regular service or a called meeting, of which all have had due notice and always by those to whose hands the church has entrusted her leadership.

4. *The majority rule should be followed, but no question should be presented at such time or in such manner as to make a mere majority vote probable.* The church should move as a unit, when possible, with-

out the sacrifice of principle.* Only on a matter of faith or morals is division justifiable, and then only as a last resort. If a minority is right in any matter, it will, in due time and by discretion, become the majority.

Subjects for Discussion

1. How does Christ, the Head of the church, express his authority for the government of his body, the church?
2. What course shall be pursued when a congregation has no members suitable to be made elders?
3. What danger would there be in changing the form of government found in the New Testament?
4. Can a congregation rightly take a vote to determine whether or not a thing is morally right? If not, why not?
5. How should such a question as the use of musical instruments in worship be decided?
6. Under what conditions is the division of a congregation permissible?
7. Name some of the ways in which discord and dissension rise in a congregation, and tell how to avoid these things.

LESSON XIII. THE UNITY AND HARMONY OF THE CHURCH

Any organization made up of human beings will contain diverse elements. The church, because of her all-inclusive invitation, has an aggregation of individuals which, for variety, can not be equaled on earth.

To the church, with her own natural burden of humanity, has been assigned the work of bringing a lost world to Christ. To so direct her energies as to accomplish this stupendous task, a few fundamental principles must be constantly observed:

1. *There must be oneness of purpose.* The Lord's command to go and teach and preach must never for a moment be lost sight of. To fix the eye on any aim short of this goal is to run amiss and spend energy in vain. To cherish differing ambitions and work along divergent lines, the church but renders her own efforts fruitless.

2. *There must be unity of action.* It is the steady tramp of many feet that sets the strong bridge swaying, when many times the weight could be borne safely in repose. Ten men acting together can do more than ten times the work of one man, but they must *act together* if they do. The "Yo, heave ho!" of laborers has a volume of meaning in it. The church must move *as a body.*

3. *There must be harmony of parts.* The type-setting machine is a marvel of mechanical perfection. Each part is made for all the others. Each motion is timed to all the others. Wheel and lever, belt and pulley, bar and key, have their separate service in the workings of the perfect whole. The slightest roughness of a matrix or variation of a

*To illustrate, a congregation is about to choose an evangelist or minister of the Word, or select a site for building; two are in prospect, and the people are about equally divided; better drop both than take a vote risking division.

slender rod, and the product of the whole is marred. The church is an organism of many parts. Each must accommodate itself to the others.

The unity and harmony of the church may be studied:

I. As It is Taught by Christ.

Note.—Jesus mentioned the church but twice. He was its founder and builder, and is referred to figuratively as its "chief corner-stone," but it did not come into being during his earthly life. The two references made to it by him are significant, however.

1. *Unity is suggested in his first mention of the church* (Matt. 16: 16-18).

(1) The nature of its foundation, "On this Rock;" *i. e.*, personal faith in Christ as expressed in the simplest confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

(2) The personality of its builder: "I will build my church." It is to be *his* conception and handiwork, hence will be uniform in every detail as the architect works out every feature of a building that is being constructed under his direction, and as his mind holds it all and his care superintends it all, so is Christ to his church.

2. *Harmony is suggested by his second reference* (Matt. 18: 15-17).

(1) The possibility of friction is recognized: "If."

(2) The right method of adjustment is set forth: "Go, show him."

3. In the intercessory prayer of our Lord (John 17: 11, 20-23) is an earnest petition for oneness.

II. As Emphasized by the Apostles.

1. *By Peter, the great apostle to the Jews* (1 Pet. 3: 8, 9).

2. *By Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles* (1 Cor. 1: 10-13; 3: 1-7; Eph. 4: 1-6).

3. *As illustrated in the apostolic writings* (1 Cor. 12: 12-27). Compared to the human body, we find the following points of similarity.

(1) The body has many members, so also has the church (12-14).

(2) The result of difference between members (15-17).

(3) To each member its own work and honor (18-21).

(4) Members supplement and assist each other (22-25).

(5) Members suffer and rejoice together (26).

III. As Exemplified in the Early Church.

1. *The church at Jerusalem*, made up of the first Jewish converts (Acts 2: 44-47).

(1) They shared a common possession (vs. 44, 45).

(2) There was unity in their worship (vs. 42, 46, 47).

2. *The church at Antioch*, made up chiefly of the first Gentile converts (Acts 11: 19-26; 13: 1-3).

(1) They were called by a new name, inclusive of both Jew and Gentile (Acts 11: 26).

(2) There was uniformity of leadership (Acts 13: 2).

(3) They were of one accord in obeying the Holy Spirit (Acts 13: 13).

The present divided state of the church is very far from the Scriptural pattern delivered to us by Jesus and his apostles. It has come about in strange ways. The Papal Church of the Dark Ages had brought in many of the corruptions and innovations of paganism and had gone far away from the precepts and examples of our Lord and

his inspired apostles, in teaching and life, in organization and spirit. This was the "mystery of lawlessness" of which Paul refers to as already at work in his day (2 Thess. 2: 7).

As the human mind became re-enlightened by the living word of God, a growing revolt against these conditions came about naturally and reasonably. In the quest for true Christian doctrine, the good and great reformers severally caught up threads of spiritual truth and strove to follow their windings back to their original source. But, on account of error still retained, the leadings were various and often apparently diverse, resulting in our present-day denominations. These have contributed immeasurably, under Providence, to human enlightenment and progress, and have served the far-reaching purpose of the kingdom of God. But the times of their usefulness, *as such*, have passed by. The tides of the present are all running unionward. Plans and devices are suggested in great plenty, but it remains that we turn ourselves, every one, to the Lord's plan.

Subjects for Discussion

1. It is often argued that the divisions prevalent in the church are necessary and beneficial. Can this position be sustained by sound argument? Try it.
2. Why do church-members often hesitate to do their part toward bringing about harmony in a congregation?
3. Will the rule given in Matt. 18: 15-17 work in every case?
4. What is to be gained by cutting off relations with the offender who refuses to be reconciled?

LESSON XIV. THE CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION

After the crucifixion the disciples scattered. After the ascension they reassembled. The story of the first congregation of Christians is told in Acts 1: 12-14. The first assembly was an informal and instinctive gathering of those most intimate with the Lord. There were present the apostles, certain women who had companied with them and the near relatives of Jesus. When he was gone they felt the need of each other's presence and counsel, so they met in the upper room of sweet memory, and there "with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer."

After Pentecost there was added reason for frequent meetings. The work of preaching the gospel had begun in earnest, opposition had been aroused, and as the number of disciples increased, their meetings would be a source of enthusiasm and encouragement. Thus it came about that those who were bound together by a common interest and engaged in a common endeavor had regular and frequent meetings together.

A more potent reason for their meetings however, and the one which endured longer than all others—still endures, in fact—was that the Lord himself, while yet in the flesh, had given them a memorial to be observed in remembrance of him. Thus we read that they "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of

bread and the prayers" (Acts 2: 42). The breaking of bread is here named along with three other exercises, any one of which might have been sufficient to occasion the assembling of Christians in one place. That this memorial became the center and occasion of the public meeting will appear from the reference to the assembly at Troas, where Luke says, "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow" (Acts 20: 7).

The interests, then, that made the Christian congregation a necessity

1. *To show the Lord's death* by keeping the memorial he had appointed.

2. *To conduct the service of teaching*, by which apostolic doctrine was imparted.

3. *To share the fellowship* or partnership of the gospel.

4. *To engage in worship* by prayer and, as we find later, by the use of "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs."

In our study we will call attention to the duties, dangers and difficulties of the local church.

I. Duties Outlined.

1. *The first duty of the church is that committed to the apostles—to preach the gospel.* Our Lord's desire was made plain. The eleven were commanded to go to all the world and teach all nations the things received from him. In carrying out their task, they organized congregations and appointed competent persons to lead in the work. In every such local church of which we have any account, the thing made most prominent was the extension of the good news that a Saviour had come. This is still the duty, and the chief duty, of the local church. It may be done by any disciple whose gifts of speech and whose uprightness of life will make the message welcome; it may be done by elders of the congregation as in certain cases recorded in the New Testament (Acts 8: 4, 5; 18: 24-26), or by evangelists and ministers set apart by the church for this work. The church has liberty as to the best method, but none as to the task assigned—she *must* go and preach.

2. *To maintain the ordinances is another duty of the local church.* Both baptism and the Lord's Supper are designed to witness for Christ before the world. They tell in symbol the facts of our faith. The congregation that would prosper must give them due prominence in its teaching and its practice. Care should be exercised that the table service and the administration of baptism be fittingly attended to, for thereby the basic principles of the gospel are often forcibly impressed on those not yet obedient to the Lord.

3. *To invite others to Christ is an important function of the congregation.* For this purpose meeting-houses are erected, the ministry supported, special services conducted and various activities kept in operation. The invitation sounded from the pulpit is the church's invitation, but it should not be the only one. Each disciple is saved to serve, and by bringing others to attendance on the public services of the congregation his work can be made effective. All that is planned and carried out in the church should be so conducted as to be, in spirit and fact, an invitation from those present to a closer relation with Christ.

II. Dangers to be Avoided.

1. *Discouragement.* A danger common to young churches and Christians, and one apt to beset even the experienced worker, is discouragement. The world is not ready to grant full right of way to the church as yet, and unexpected oppositions will arise. The scourge of denominational prejudice will afflict. Many who enlist energetically will turn back. Disagreement among members occurs. There will come times when no ray of hope shines to beckon on. As every child must come up through the dangers and diseases incident to infancy, so every congregation must be made strong by resisting these discouragements. God is with his people. The church is the body of Christ. With such headship there is no possibility of ultimate failure, if we do our best. The Master saw, beyond the cross and the tomb, and the centuries of darkness, that his way would triumph in the end. This nerved him to his sacrifice, as it should cheer us in our service.

2. *Dissension* is a danger sure to be encountered. No family but has differences to reconcile. How much more may they be expected in a congregation of individuals widely different in temperament and training. Love saves the family from disruption, and it should so operate in the church that only good can come from such differences as arise. Differences are not always an evil. Dissension may lead, finally, to the best. The rule to be followed in all such cases is that of mutual concession for love's sake, in which due regard for others is made the key to each difficulty.

3. *Division* is a serious stage to which dissension sometimes leads. Division in the body of Christ should be regarded with horror. It should be avoided at any cost, save that of the life of the body itself. When the question at issue is one of essential Scriptural teaching affecting the faith of the body, or of morals corrupting its life, severe measures may be employed, as when a member of the human body is amputated to save life.

III. Difficulties to Overcome.

1. *The need of trained workers.* One person who knows how, can make a church in many a community, and the death or removal of some leading spirit often cripples a congregation for years. It should not be so. There should be more members who know the details of thoroughgoing religious work. By means of special classes and frequent meetings for the discussion of the best methods, and by attendance upon conventions and kindred gatherings, much can be done to gain a better grasp of effective endeavor for the kingdom.

2. *Harmonizing of diverse elements.* In the church are assembled those who, in other walks of life, bear various relations to each other. The rich man and the poor, the employer and his employe, the housewife and her help, the learned and the uneducated, the professional man and the mechanic—all these are thrown together in the church. Here each stands upon his own personal merit, all worldly standards of measurement being discarded. Here all are members of one family. There are no social distinctions in Christ. To so conduct the affairs of a congregation as to profitably engage them all in a common worship and a common service will not always be easy. Each one will have his part in the endeavor.

3. *Care of the weak and wayward.* Some members of the church have been used to lives not becoming to the new relation. The old ties will still bind them. They must be encouraged and borne up till new habits are formed and new associations established. Some are wayward by nature. They will wander often, and continually try the patience of their brethren. It is easy to become critical of such, but the God of us all is patient, else we would not be numbered with his flock. The wayward must be sought out and restored. To sin is human, but to save the sinner is divine.

4. *Financing the work.* We have put this last. It is not least nor easiest, but if what has already been outlined be done first, the finance feature is made simple. Let there be sufficient interest, and a fellow-feeling will bind the body together and the needed fellowship or partnership will be assured. When we give ourselves it becomes easy to give our money. No plan can be adopted in detail in all congregations, but the plan that gets an offering from each member each week will operate best in most cases. A very common error in our day is that each church, to continue and thrive, must of necessity have a "settled pastor" from the first. The support of one who gives his entire attention to the preaching of the Word may be wise as part of the program of a church, but it is no part of the church itself. A group of earnest disciples can constitute a church and carry on its work prosperously without "regular preaching." In many cases this is by far the better way.

The importance of congregational training and culture can not be overestimated. The welfare of the whole work from the local Bible school to the hospital and dispensary in farthest India, depends upon the kind of congregations we have. Each congregation has a character and is known in the kingdom by the kind of work it does. The building up and improvement of our local churches is a most essential enterprise of the kingdom at the present time, for thereby we strengthen the whole body of the Lord.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Do the three duties of the church named under the first main head of this lesson cover sufficient ground, or are there others that should be included? Should the church, as such, go into politics, for example?

2. How far should the church give herself to physical ministries, such as nursing, healing and rendering aid to the needy? Are these her obligations primarily, or are they incident to a more important work?

3. How may dissension in a congregation be avoided? Work out some safe and sufficient rules, or, better, find Scriptural rules. (See Phil. 2: 1-4.)

4. When division threatens a congregation, what course should be followed? Is it ever desirable or justifiable?

5. What difficulty, of those mentioned, is most common and what one hardest to overcome?

6. What do you regard as the greatest weakness of congregational churches?

LESSON XV. ORGANIZATION FOR WORK

Organization is the placing of each part so as to make the whole effective.

Given, a force and a work, organization so utilizes and applies the force as to make it do the work.

By organizing the parts of an engine or dynamo, the stored-up energy of nature is hitched to the tasks of humanity.

By organization of interests, the great currents of commerce and trade are set in motion.

By relating men to each other for a given purpose, elections are controlled and great issues decided.

Is there any reason why a church organization should be managed in a slipshod, fast-and-loose manner? If not, why are so many congregations contented with such conditions?

There is every reason why the church should be the best conducted concern on earth:

1. *Its enterprise is the greatest and most important.*

2. *Its resources are most varied and variable.*

3. *Its plan is a voluntary* co-operation dependent upon the harmonious working of all its parts.

4. *Its work is done by volunteers* who are bound to do their work "as unto the Lord."

The problem of any enterprise is the problem of organization. Fred Harvey was asked to establish and operate a line of restaurants for a great railroad system. After some time for consideration he declined the position and the tempting salary. Asked why, he answered, "I can't find enough men of the right kind."

The church has before her the greatest undertaking ever projected. The power is furnished, and if she can find the right men and place them wisely, it can be done.

I. WHY ORGANIZE FOR RELIGIOUS WORK?

1. *To get the Lord's work done—by* men and *in* men. Organization of the right kind helps the work and the worker. If it fails in this, it is trouble for nothing.

2. *To get each one to work.* Fortunes have been made from waste products. It should be our aim to save the waste in our church work. Scattering influences from lives of Christians, now practically fruitless, if diverted to the legitimate work of the church, would save the world.

3. *To provide work for each one.* To prevent losses should be a constant endeavor. Practical people turn from any organization that does not have activity and an objective. If you would keep people to the church, keep them busy in the church.

4. *To get each one in his place.* To simply urge all to work may accomplish very little. Such a course may give people a will to work, but there must be a way as well as a will, and not every Christian can find a wise way.

II. WHEN TO ORGANIZE.

1. *When there is a work to do.* There was no such organization

as the church until a great work had been assigned. There were no deacons in the church until they were needed for the daily ministration, and no elders until the work of teaching and caring for the needy became too extensive for the twelve. The rule should be, first a work and then a way. An organization without a definite work to do is worse than useless, it is hurtful. If this one rule were observed, there would be no overorganization. Let the needs of the work call for the organization.

2. *When there is material to be organized.* The mere election of officers and appointment of committees is of no value—it may be a disadvantage. Skeletons of extinct organizations are often a hindrance.

3. *When a people have a will to work.* To organize a listless and disinterested group of people by selecting officers and naming committees is of no use; such a body is no better organized than disorganized. It is the nature and desire of the people that makes organization of value.

III. How to Organize.—The church is the body of Christ. As such she is subject to him—the head over all things to her—and her chief responsibility is to carry out his will on earth. He made it his business, while here, to heal, teach and preach. These ministries were assumed by the early church and provision made to carry them on. Organization kept pace with the demands of the work. To carry out our Lord's will is apostolic and thoroughly orthodox, and the method which best serves this purpose is most Scriptural. In every case a congregation must make provision for these activities, or it will not prosper and succeed as it should.

1. *Scriptural provision.* There must be competent leadership. The congregation must have overseers and servants to direct her affairs and minister to her needs. Provision is made for this in the divine plan revealed to us in the New Testament. Elders and deacons are to be chosen from among the brethren. They are the natural and Scriptural leaders, and, being chosen by the church itself, it is but the body attending to its own affairs in a decent and orderly way. Beyond this primitive plan no scheme can be bound on any church. Any further organization should grow out of the needs of the work, and be directed and approved by those whom the Holy Spirit hath "made bishop to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."*

2. *Reasonable and regular organization.* Provision must be made to carry on the ministries appointed by the Lord. In many churches the elders and deacon, if active and attentive to duty, can look after these things in a general way, and in any church, if they are indifferent, it will be of little use for them to assign these duties to others. Where a congregation is large, however, and the work too

*It will be noted that no reference is here made to organization beyond the congregation. The reason for this is that we are following the New Testament pattern. The right of disciples to associate themselves together for the promotion of any Christian work can not be denied, but such organization (missionary and benevolent associations. Bible societies, etc.) is no part of the church, can not presume to control, direct or become correlated to the churches nor yet to be controlled by them. They are business concerns as truly as is a bank or manufacturing concern.

great for them, these brethren should call others to their aid and see that the work is properly done.

(1) The "daily ministration." In the early church the distribution of food to the needy was so designated. In the church of to-day it should cover all ministries to the physical needs, such as visiting the sick, seeking out and aiding the needy, encouraging the distressed and downcast. To this work any number of disciples may be delegated, and they may be designated as a committee or society as is best. The ideal state is where each Christian does these things voluntarily, but, falling short of the ideal, we must see that the work is done.

(2) The teaching service. Not every one is "apt to teach," so elders were to be selected with this in mind, for the church must teach. If the work of teaching in a given case is too great for the elders, they may adopt proper methods to have it carried on. The Bible school of the local church is the product of the teaching function of the church; it is her voluntary effort at self-preservation. Paul instructed his associates to commit the truth they held to faithful men who should be able to teach others. The Bible school should be under the direction and care of the eldership, or, perhaps better, the eldership should have the care and direction of the Bible school. As a matter of fact, the elders are often strangers to the school and the school a long, long reach ahead of the eldership. In this there is need of restoration of the divine plan. The elders may call others to aid them and effect such organization as the case may require, but for them to resign this important work entirely to the hands of others is unscriptural and abnormal.

(3) The preaching of the Word. In the early church there were those in the eldership who "labored in word and doctrine." As life became more complex and duty more specific, the work of preaching came to be done more and more by those who, by nature or preparation, were best able to proclaim the Word. Then it was that Paul asserted that "they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel," and that they that minister in spiritual things should be ministered to in temporal things. Thus the elders of a congregation could bring to their assistance those most competent to perform this important service. Such an one was not a "pastor," in the modern sense of that word; *i. e.*, one who assumes entire charge of the affairs of the congregation, and is expected to visit all the sick, conduct the Bible school and preach twice a week in the bargain. This state of things is an abuse and a perversion of the primitive order.

4. *The "Official Board."* Those in charge of a congregation should hold regular meetings, once a month, or, better, once a week, to consider the interests of the work in their care. For lack of a name for this body, made up usually of elders and deacons, it has been called the "Official Board" and in some cases the "Executive Committee." The Scriptures know neither designation, nor, for that matter, do they know the term "Bible school" or "prayer-meeting." If care be taken not to vary from the essential plan of the Scriptures, the mere matter of designation, where no Scriptural name is given, is not of greatest importance.

The brethren composing this body should have such organization as will expedite their work—chairman, secretary, treasurer and committees as they may be needed, such as finance, repair, membership, pulpit, etc., but no invariable plan of procedure can be attempted. In every case let the work lead to the plans rather than the plans to the work.

Subjects for Discussion

1. What is meant by organization and what is to be gained by it?
2. Under the rule "Where the Scriptures speak we speak, where the Scriptures are silent we are silent," how are we justified in forming any organization or making use of any method not found in the primitive churches?
3. Should the organization of all congregations be the same? *Can* we have uniformity here? If not, why not?
4. Are forms of organization additional to the simple New Testament order to be considered as integral parts of the church or as mere tools to be used or not as may best suit our needs?
5. What evils result from organization above and beyond the local church if regarded as religious organizations?

PART IV.

FIVE LESSONS ON CHURCH HISTORY

Lesson XVI. The Period of Beginnings
Lesson XVII. The Period of Persecution
Lesson XVIII. The Falling Away
Lesson XIX. The Reformation
Lesson XX. The Restoration

LESSON XVI. THE PERIOD OF BEGINNINGS

The growth of the church may be compared to that of the oak. From the lowliest beginnings it has risen steadily to strength and majesty. Yet we have not seen the true glory of the church; what she is but faintly overshadows what she shall be. The living oak is splendid, but only when its strength is put to use does it serve highest ends. The church has been all these centuries getting ready. And for what? To take the world for Jesus Christ—to save mankind through the gospel.

With this view of the church's destiny her early years will be full of interest: it is only when a man shows greatness that his boyhood becomes significant and interesting. Every step of her past progress is vitally related to what the church is and what she is yet to be.

The beginnings of the church—that period covered by the New Testament records—may be studied in three sections set off from each other by as many transitional steps.

I. The Beginning at Jerusalem.

1. *The time and place* of this beginning was definitely *foretold by Christ.* (Read Matt. 16: 13-21; Luke 24: 46, 47; Acts 1: 4, 5.)

2. *This beginning was among the Jews*, and for several years the gospel was not preached to Gentiles (Matt. 10: 5, 6; Acts 11: 9). The Jews were a prepared people. The apostles were all Jews. The first gospel sermon was preached by a Jew, to Jews, in the Jewish temple, on a Jewish feast day, and all the converts were Jews.

3. *Development of this Jewish church.*

(1) Provision for the destitute (Acts 4: 34-37).

(2) Selection of brethren for special service in the church (Acts 6: 1-6). These servants were not called deacons, but the deaconate of local churches is the outgrowth of provision here made.

(3) Persecution of first disciples (Acts 8: 1-3).

(4) Extension of the gospel to the Samaritans (Acts 8: 4-25).

(5) The conversion of Saul and his appointment to the apostolic

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHURCH

JERUSALEM
(THE JEWS)
ACTS 1-7.

- EVANGELISTIC ZEAL,
  PETER, JOHN, STEPHEN, PHILIP.
- BITTER OPPOSITION,
  ARREST, BEATING, IMPRISONMENT, MARTYRDOM.
- BENEVOLENT ENTERPRISE,
  SALE OF LANDS, ALL THINGS COMMON, DAILY MINISTRATION.

SAMARIA
(THE SAMARITANS)
ACTS 8-10.

- LISTENING MULTITUDES.
- PENITENT BELIEVERS OBEYING THE GOSPEL.
- SPECIAL SIGNS FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH THE APOSTLES.

ANTIOCH
(THE GENTILES)
ACTS 11-16: 10.

- A NEW NAME—CHRISTIANS.
- NEW PROBLEMS—COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM.
- NEW ENTERPRISE—FIRST MISSIONARIES SENT FORTH.

MACEDONIA
(THE WORLD)
ACTS 16: 11-28.

- THE HUMAN CRISIS—ACTS 16: 6-8.
- THE READY FIELD—ACTS 16: 9.
- THE SPIRIT'S CALL—ACTS 16: 10.

office charged with a ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 9: 1-20; 22: 1-16; 26: 1-18).

II. The Church at Antioch.—Read Acts 11: 19-26. Concerning this first and typical Gentile congregation note:

1. *Preparations had been made for such a move as this.*

(1) Peter, apostle to the Jews, had been shown that all nations were alike to God (Acts 10: 9-35).

(2) Cornelius, a prominent Gentile of Cæsarea, with his household, had been baptized by Peter (Acts 10: 1-48).

(3) The Jewish church at Jerusalem had investigated the incident of these Gentile conversions and approved it (Acts 11: 1-18).

(4) Saul, who had been chosen for special work among the Gentiles, had been in training (Acts 9: 20-30) and was ready to begin at Antioch (Acts 11: 25, 26).

2. *The enlargement was signalized by the adoption of a new name* (Acts 11: 26). This name became the common designation for disciples (Acts 26: 28; 1 Pet. 4: 15, 16).

3. *The missionary enterprise assumed new proportions at Antioch* (Acts 13: 1-3). Heretofore missionary effort has been largely individual; disciples told the story voluntarily wherever they went, and results followed. But it took persecution to scatter them and set them to work in new fields. Here the Holy Spirit directs a church to send men forth and assume the responsibility, and it is done.

4. *The question of enforcing Jewish religious rites* on Gentile Christians came up for settlement at Antioch (Acts 15: 1). It was appealed to the apostles at Jerusalem, who called an assembly of the church and rendered a decision under guidance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15: 1-29). This is known as the "council at Jerusalem."

5. *Paul's first missionary journey* was completed, and he, with Barnabas and Mark, returned and reported to the church at Antioch (Acts 13: 4-14: 28). The apostle then sets forth on a second journey, visiting churches formerly established (Acts 15: 36; 16: 5). At Troas the party is halted, evidently hemmed in by circumstances, and hindered by the Holy Spirit from going into other parts of Asia (Acts 16: 6-10).

III. The Entering of Macedonia (Acts 16: 9, 10).

Note.—Paul has three companions from here—Luke, Silas and Timothy.

1. *The significance of the step.*

(1) It was the breaking of all bonds and the beginning of a world-conquest for the gospel. The living message has spread from Jew to Samaritan, then to Gentile, and now it goes "into all the world."

(2) Here again, as at the house of Cornelius and in the vision of Peter, a special messenger appears to indicate the line of advance.

(3) Paul's special commission to the Gentiles begins from Troas. Henceforth, though his beginning in each new field is with Jews, his evident aim is to preach to the Gentile peoples.

2. *Progress in Europe.*

(1) At Philippi, the chief city of that section, Lydia, a Jewess, and the Roman jailer, with their families, were converted (Acts 16: 11-40), and a congregation was formed (Phil. 1: 1, 2).

(2) At Thessalonica there were many conversions, some of them people of prominence, but persecution of the Jews interrupted their work (Acts 17: 1-9). But a church was formed here (1 Thess. 1: 1).

(3) At Berea there was a ready response to the message, but Jews from Thessalonica followed and Paul was sent away (Acts 17: 10-15).

(4) At Athens, the city of Greek culture, Paul preached on Mars' hill to a Gentile audience, with but little effect (Acts 17: 16-32).

(5) At Corinth Paul found two fellow-craftsmen, Aquila and Priscilla, and, laboring with them at their trade of tent-making, he supported himself until the gospel was firmly established and a good church organized (1 Cor. 1: 1-3). After this he returned to Antioch in Syria (Acts 18: 1-22). Thus ended the second missionary journey of Paul.

3. *Paul's third tour.*

(1) He visited former fields of labor in Asia, establishing the disciples (Acts 18: 22, 23). Then he remained more than two years at Ephesus (Acts 19: 1; 20: 1).

(2) After this he went among the churches of Macedonia and returned to Judea by way of Troas, making short stops there and at Miletus (Acts 20: 1-38).

4. *The journey to Rome.*

When Paul reached Jerusalem, the Jews formed a conspiracy against him. He was kept a prisoner at Cæsarea, under false accusation. Appealing to Cæsar, he was taken to Rome, where, after a time, he was granted semi-liberty and permitted to preach to and teach such as came to him (Acts 28: 30).

5. *Paul's final tour.*

It is very generally believed that Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome in the spring of 63 A. D., and that, for three or four years thereafter, he continued his ministry in various parts of the empire. This he fully expected as indicated in Philem. 22 and Phil. 2: 24. And this final tour is clearly implied in the events noted in the following Scriptures: leaving Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1: 3); leaving Titus in Crete (Tit. 1: 5); leaving Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim. 4: 20); his wintering at Nicopolis (Tit. 3: 12). Traditions relate that he suffered martyrdom at Rome, 67 A. D.

Paul is supposed to have been beheaded rather than crucified, because he was a Roman citizen, and because it was unlawful to put a Roman citizen to death on a cross. Where Paul was beheaded is not certainly known. It is generally supposed to have occurred at a place called the "Salvian Waters," about three miles from Rome, and that he was buried in the Ostian Way, where a magnificent church was afterwards built. But of this there is no absolute certainty. The following thoughtful reference to the close of Paul's life may fitly close our lesson:

> It is far more important and interesting for us to be assured, from the character which he evinced, and from the proofs of his zeal and toil in the cause of the Lord Jesus, that his spirit rested in the bosom of his Saviour and his God. Wherever he died, his spirit, we doubt not, is in heaven. And where that body rested at last, which he labored "to keep under," and which he sought to bring "into subjection (1 Cor. 9 : 27), and which was to him so much the source of conflict and of sin (Rom. 7 : 5, 23), is a matter of little conse-

quence. It will be watched and guarded by the eye of that Saviour whom he served, and will be raised up to immortality. In his own inimitable language, it was sown in corruption; it shall be raised in incorruption: it was sown in dishonor; it shall be raised up in glory: it was sown in weakness; it shall be raised in power: it was sown a natural body; it shall be raised a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:42-44). And in regard to him and all other saints, "when this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54). To Paul, now, what are all his sorrows and persecutions, and toils in the cause of his Master? What but a source of thanksgiving that he was permitted thus to labor to spread the gospel through the world? So may we live—imitating his life of zeal and self-denial and faithfulness—that when he rises from the dead, we may participate with him in the glories of the resurrection of the just.—*Barnes' "Notes on Acts."*

DATES TO REMEMBER.

Church at Jerusalem—Pentecost	A. D. 30.
Conversion of Paul	A. D. 36.
Conversion of Cornelius	A. D. 41.
Establishment of church at Antioch	A. D. 38-41.
Beginning of first missionary journey	A. D. 49.
Beginning of second missionary journey	A. D. 50.
Beginning of third missionary journey	A. D. 53.
Arrest at Jerusalem and imprisonment in Cæsarea	A. D. 57.
Journey to Rome	A. D. 59.
Death	A. D. 66 or 70.

NOTE.—It is impossible to be absolutely correct as to New Testament chronology. The dates here given are not far from those given by leading authorities. For all general purposes, they are sufficiently accurate.

Subjects for Discussion

1. What reasons can be assigned for the choice of Pentecost as suited for a first full proclamation of the gospel?
2. Why was the first work confined so largely to Jews?
3. In what particulars was the conversion of Cornelius different from that of other conversions? (This should be made very clear.)
4. Were there good reasons why the name "Christian" should be first used in the Gentile church at Antioch?
5. Significance of the call to Macedonia. Why would a country of civilization and culture need the gospel? Was there not plenty of work yet to do in Asia?
6. Go over Paul's journeys on a good wall map.

LESSON XVII. THE PERIOD OF PERSECUTION

Any living thing is strengthened by being compelled to resist. The oak, before it is fitted for beam or mast, has been twisted and swayed by many a fierce tempest. The cat, in absence of other occupation, draws its claws over a wooden surface, compelling the muscles to work against an opposing force. The most approved form of physical culture consists of the mere arraying of one muscle against another in

temporary contest. We are the product of our oppositions more than our harmonious relations. There is a scientific truth in the stanza:

"Fight manfully onward,
For yielding is sin.
Each victory will help you
Some other to win."

That principle which holds true in the realm of trees and animals is true also of doctrines, organizations and reforms. That divine wisdom which provides each living creature with such furnishment as he needs, and such a life-experience as will best minister to his development; which takes each heaven-bound soul up through great tribulation; which provided that Jesus, though he were a son, should be made a perfect Saviour through suffering—that wisdom seems to have appointed that his body, the church, should grow strong by struggle and affliction.

The persecutions of the early church arose from contact with other and long-established religious systems. The mild and inoffensive methods of love seemed to fail and fall into confusion before the fierce passions of unsubdued human nature. The church suffered much at first, but, when the storm had spent itself, she was still there, white and pure and stronger than before. Truly the blood of martyrs proved to be the seed of the church.

I. Jewish Persecutions. The gains of the church were from Jewish ranks almost wholly for several years. For this reason the new religion was in disfavor among the Jews.

The two leading sects of the Jews were Pharisees and Sadducees. The former were the more numerous, but the latter more influential. The Pharisees were of the rank and file—the strictly orthodox—while the Sadducees were aristocratic and exclusive. Though in constant controversy with each other, they often joined their forces to oppress the new "Way" that had appeared.

1. *The first persecutions* were petty oppositions, threatenings, imprisonments and an occasional beating. These were usually administered on a false charge, and always with the hope of compelling silence as to the facts of our Lord's life. Almost always the preaching of the resurrection stirred up bitter resentment. Read Acts 4: 1-3, 15-21; 5: 17, 18, 33-42.

2. *The "tribulation about Stephen"* (Acts 6: 7) shows the real cause of the persecution that cost Stephen his life. Christianity was proving successful and must be thwarted at any cost. So great was the number of disciples in Jerusalem that seven men were chosen to superintend the distribution of aid to the needy. The first severe blow fell on one of this seven. Stephen, a man "full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people." Because of this he was set upon and slain (Acts 6: 8-15; 7: 1-60). But the result of this deed, and others that followed, was far from disastrous, for the disciples that fled from Jerusalem at this time went to other cities telling the story with earnest boldness (Acts 8: 4-8).

3. *The persecution by Herod.* It was some years later, after Saul, the leader of the persecution following Stephen's death, had himself become a disciple, that Herod "put forth his hand to afflict certain of

the church." In this onslaught James perished by the sword and Peter had a miraculous escape from prison (Acts 12: 1-24). And here again the account ends with a triumphant note: "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

4. *Other Jewish persecutions.* Wherever Paul went he was misrepresented and mistreated by those of his nation. He was stoned, imprisoned and beaten, but the rage of Jewry had about spent itself when the gospel began to be known at Rome, and, before Paul's work was done, the power of Hebrew opposition was waning, but danger began to be manifest in another quarter. It was for Paul to suffer from persecutions among his own countrymen, and then be delivered to the new and more formidable foe that had appeared as an ally to aid in suppressing the church. Read Acts 21: 27-40; 25: 11, 12; 26: 30-32; 27: 1-44.

II. Pagan Persecutions. The occasional oppositions of the Jews in Palestine and elsewhere, as told in Acts, served but to spur the disciples to greater earnestness and to drive them to wider fields. The more terrible scourgings inflicted later on sicken the soul to faintness as one reads.

There were ten great persecutions in the period from the time of Emperor Nero, A. D. 64, to A. D. 313, when Constantine granted toleration toward the Christians. The most violent and widespread of the persecutions were:

1. Under Nero .....A. D. 64.
2. Under Trajan .....A. D. 107.
3. Under Maximus .....A. D. 235.
4. Under Decius .....A. D. 249.
5. Under Diocletian .....A. D. 303.

It is impossible to ascertain the number of those who perished in the struggle with paganism. It has been estimated as running into hundreds of thousands, but Gibbon (who, however, is known to be somewhat prejudiced against Christianity) thinks this much in excess of the actual number. Certain it is that they were burned, crucified, torn asunder by beasts, buried alive, and subjected to tortures and torments of every imaginable kind. But these early Christians rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name" (Acts 5: 41); and in the times of severest trial their number was being increased by accessions from the very household of Cæsar, so that it was seen again to be true that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church.

III. Subsequent Persecutions. Samuel Edgar, in his "Variations of Popery," tells of three periods of persecution. The first was against the gospel from outside the church; this extends from the beginning to the time when Constantine was made emperor, in 325. The second was also against the gospel, but it was *within the church*, where temporal power had assumed control; it extends from Constantine to the Reformation—about one thousand years. The third was against the gospel as set forth in the Reformation, and was carried on *by the church*—the apostate church, in which the headship of Christ has been disowned and a man made "lord of the church." This persecution continued with severity till the Reformation had established itself, and

continues to-day wherever Romanism dares to stand forth in true colors.

This lesson deals with but the first period, the others falling more naturally into the time covered by the two subsequent lessons.

It was never meant that force should be used to advance the gospel. The inquisitor, though an agent of the church, is as far removed from the Lord, both in character and office, as can be imagined. The apostles walked in the footsteps of their Master, gladly suffering persecution for the gospel's sake. For several ages the Fathers faithfully imitated the example set by them. Bernard, in harmony with his pious predecessors, enjoins toleration and patience. "Faith is conveyed," says he, "by persuasion and not by constraint. The patrons of heresy are to be assailed, not by arms, but by arguments. Attack them, but with the Word, not the sword."

"Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you," said the Lord, and his words held true and yet hold, but accursed was the church in that day when she became a persecutor, and accursed to this day is any organization which hides bloody hands under a cloak of pretended discipleship to the meek and lowly Jesus. That there was purpose in these persecutions, or rather that God has used them to the advantage of his gospel, no one can doubt, but this does not relieve those responsible for it from the guilt of having "persecuted the church of God."

Subjects for Discussion

1. Debate: *Resolved*, That men and institutions are benefited by their hardships more than by favors shown them.
2. Is religious persecution ever justifiable?
3. Is it persecution to courteously expose false teaching?
4. How far may the church take action against those whose conduct or teaching is unscriptural?
5. Are men ever "persecuted for righteousness' sake" in our day?
6. Give some familiar instances where opposition is a source of strength and growth.

LESSON XVIII. THE FALLING AWAY

Jesus said that his gospel would be preached in the whole world (Matt. 24: 14; Luke 24: 46, 47). But no great transfiguration is wrought suddenly. This is true particularly of moral movements. To be safe and lasting, such crusades must rest on teaching, and the process is necessarily slow.

Every good thing has enemies and opposers, and the better it is the more numerous will be its foes. The church was no exception to this rule. Many disciples would be discouraged in the absence of the great leader. Violent persecutions would dismay others. The allurements of former lives would win many from the faith. But the encroachment of organized world powers, and their possession of the church, did more than all else to paralyze and hinder progress.

There was a "falling away" early in the history of the church, which cast its chill over many hundred years. Could the first dis-

ciples have had a glimpse of the future, apprehension would have cooled their evangelistic ardor. But He who cares for tiny seeds when winter falls, would see that their sowings did not suffer. It was for them to do His bidding, for Him to take care of results, and it is for us to see the fruitage of that marvelous past.

The apostasy may be considered in three separate aspects:

I. As Foreseen and Foretold by Inspired Apostles. Read 2 Thess. 2: 1-12; Acts 20: 29, 31; 1 Tim. 4: 1, 2, 3; 2 Tim. 3: 1-9, and note.

1. *The "mystery of lawlessness was already at work," but "there is one that restraineth now until he be taken out of the way"* (2 Thess. 2: 7). Date, A. D. 52.

2. *After Paul's death the evil would break forth openly* (Acts 20: 29, 30). Date, A. D. 58.

3. *This power would eventually sit "in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God"* (2 Thess. 2: 4).

4. *"Doctrines of demons" would be taught as from God*, "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by all them that believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4: 1-3). All of this, says Paul, "the Spirit saith expressly." In 2 Tim. 3: 1-9, he further describes the terrible times in prospect. Date, A. D. 66. Paul's last Epistle.

II. As Affecting the Organization of the Church.

1. *The primitive organization* was distinguished by

(1) Its simplicity. In each congregation were elders to attend to spiritual matters and deacons to handle temporal things.

(2) Its democracy. The congregation was highest authority and the people ruled in the congregation.

2. *Perversion of the elder's office* was the beginning of evils. The leading elder of a congregation came to be regarded as head of the flock. The leading elder of the leading church in a group of congregations came to be looked upon as virtual director of the affairs of all. Thus at last the most prominent elder in the church at Rome came to have special honor paid him from all members of all churches in the empire.

3. *The Christian religion was adopted as the religion of the Roman Empire* by Constantine in 313 A. D. The power of the bishop or elder of the Roman Church continued to grow till, in 440, he was officially declared to be the "rector of the whole church." With this flagrant perversion of the office and functions of the bishops in the churches of the New Testament, as the years went by, "archbishops" and "cardinals" were introduced, adding other links in the most despotic hierarchy the world has ever known. Thus the organization of the New Testament church is wholly subverted.

4. *The scheme of apostolic succession* was worked out by Leo II., in 460 A. D. It represented Peter as the first pope, with a line of successors, each having power to give the "keys of the kingdom to the lower clergy." It has no foundation in history.

5. *The title "Lord of the Whole Church"* was bestowed on the Bishop of Rome by Emperor Justinian in 533, and the Papal dominion in the church was complete. Mr. Campbell, in his debate with Bishop Purcell, affirmed that the first pope was crowned in 606 A. D.

III. As Affecting the Doctrines of the Church.

1. *The names* "church of Christ" and "church of God" used by apostles gave way to the name "Holy Roman Catholic Church."

2. *The ordinances* were perverted. Sprinkling was authorized as valid, instead of immersion, in 1311. The Lord's Supper was given a marvelous and unscriptural significance; the loaf and the wine were said to become the very body and blood of Jesus. Only the loaf was given to communicants, the priests drinking the wine themselves. Such are still the teachings of Catholicism. Protestant denominations have modified this practice, but have not restored the primitive one.

3. *The intercession of the priest* was set up between the sinner and Christ, and in Catholic teaching stands there to-day, in the form of the confessional.

4. *Purgatory* was invented and became a fruitful source of revenue. It was an imaginary place of punishment beyond the grave, where sinners paid penalty for wrong-doing before entering into their reward. It is a staple doctrine of Rome in our own day.

5. *Papal infallibility* was declared by the decree of the Vatican Council, 1870 A. D. It asserts that the voice of the pope teaching *ex cathedra*—as the head of the church—is the voice of God.

6. *Good works were substituted for faith in Christ*, so that one might believe little, be corrupt in life, and yet atone by doing "good works."

These are but a few examples. Scarcely a doctrine but was so perverted as to have lost its former simplicity and significance. These departures from the simple doctrines of the early church led to what is known in history as the "Dark Ages." Temporal power was made use of in forwarding religious work. Human authority was substituted for divine and the Book of God closed to the people. For about ten centuries the gloom is broken only occasionally by a ray of light from some consecrated and heroic life. There were true disciples at all times, however. Men and women there were who served God with sincerity of purpose and singleness of aim in spite of the abuses about them. It was during this long, dark period that the church, as prefigured in Rev. 12: 1-6, was in the wilderness, awaiting the deliverance which came in the successive reformations which began with the fifteenth century.

Subjects for Discussion

1. What was Paul's purpose in telling early Christians of the "falling away" that should come?

2. Is it remarkable that the simplicity of the gospel should have been so corrupted? Can this be accounted for by anything in the historic setting of the early church?

3. Would it be safe yet to-day for any religious body to be given civil authority or special recognition?

4. Debate: *Resolved*, That a union of church and state would be detrimental to our Government.

5. Debate: *Resolved*, That the formation of a central organization in which churches, as such, would be represented by delegates would have in it elements of danger.

LESSON XIX. THE REFORMATION

The period of history known familiarly as "The Dark Ages" covers approximately one thousand years. It may be regarded as beginning about A. D. 400 and ending about A. D. 1400. In a general way, the one hundred years between 400 and 500 was a century of digression and that from 1400 to 1500 was a century of reformation. However, both the digressive and the reformatory influences were at work before, and continued beyond these dates, so that positive lines may not be drawn.

The fifteenth century (1400-1500) is the century of reformation. It was during this period that the shoots appeared from which the great denominational bodies, with their many branches and subdivisions, have sprung. (See chart on p. 67.)

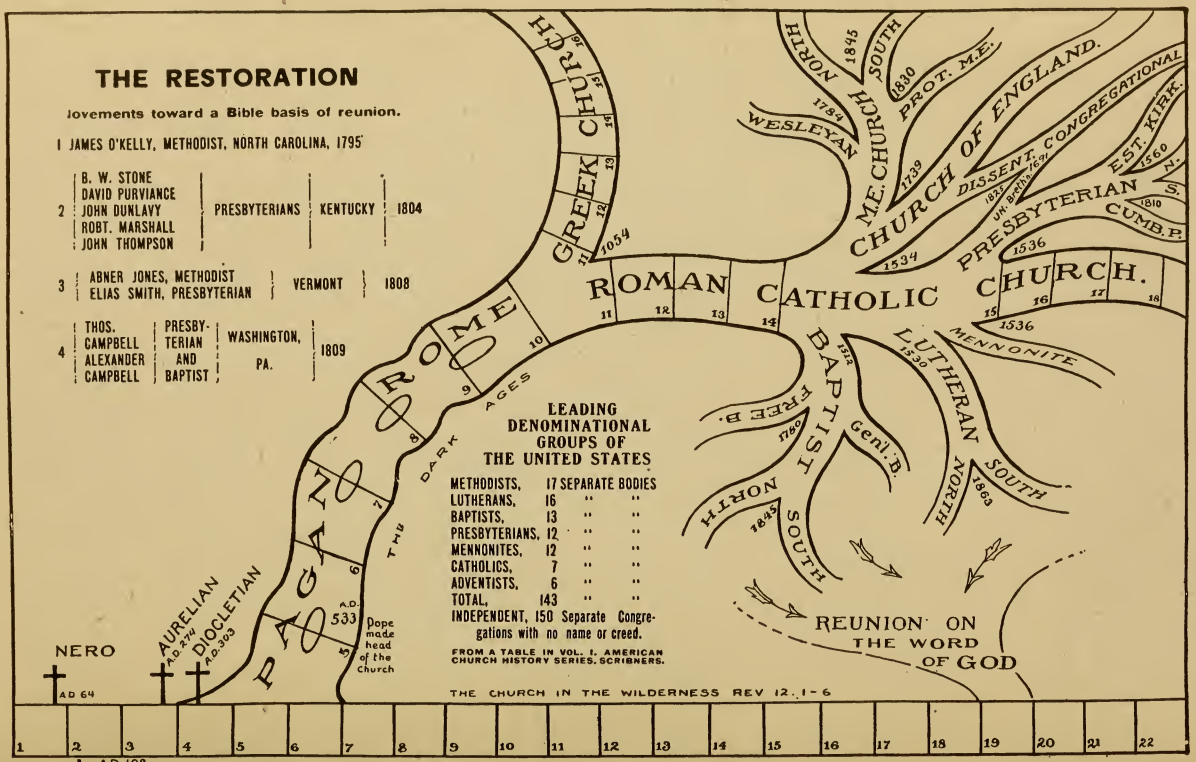
The perversion of the gospel came by the usurpations of men ambitious for self; the Reformation came by heroic sacrifices and determined contentions of men ambitious for Christ. The history of the Reformation gathers about the religious leaders of the time. We note, then:

I. Seven Great Reformers—Preparation.

1. *John Wycliffe* (pronounced Wy—long); 1320-1384. Wycliffe is known as "The Morning Star of the Reformation," because he appeared in the dark hour before dawn. His field of labor was England. He was a preacher, debater and translator. Some begging friars came to see him when he was thought to be dying. Having heard them through, he said: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the errors and sins of you wicked men more than ever." His greatest work was to translate the Bible into the crude English of the time. He died of paralysis and was buried near his church which still stands at Lutterworth. Nearly fifty years later, when the force of his work began to be felt by enemies of the true word of God, his bones were dug up, burned and scattered on the waters of a brook near by.

2. *John Huss;* 1369-1415. Huss was a native of Bavaria, one of the German states. As a student he gave much attention to the Scriptures. Here he learned to know the truth and to preach it rather than the false teachings of Rome. The writings of Wycliffe influenced him greatly. The Pope tried several plans, but Huss could not be silenced. Finally, by aid of a perfidious emperor, Huss was persuaded to appear at Constance for trial. Safety was assured, but he was betrayed, imprisoned and finally burned as an heretic.

3. *Girolama Savonarola;* 1452-1498. Savonarola was an Italian priest residing in Florence. He was of honorable family and it was meant he should be a physician. He entered a monastery at seventeen and spent years in study of the Scriptures. His direct simplicity of speech drew great crowds. He was outspoken against prevailing error. He persuaded the people to burn their costly and useless ornaments. He boldly condemned all evil even in the Pope himself. For this he suffered martyrdom. He was burned and his ashes thrown into the river Arno on May 23, 1498. This was six years after the discovery of America by another Italian, who was also a Catholic. Thus, while


THE RESTORATION
lovements toward a Bible basis of reunion.
1 JAMES O'KELLY, METHODIST, NORTH CAROLINA, 1795
2 B. W. STONE, DAVID PURVIANCE, JOHN DUNLAVY, ROBT. MARSHALL, JOHN THOMPSON — PRESBYTERIANS — KENTUCKY — 1804
3 ABNER JONES, METHODIST; ELIAS SMITH, PRESBYTERIAN — VERMONT — 1808
4 THOS. CAMPBELL, ALEXANDER CAMPBELL — PRESBYTERIAN AND BAPTIST — WASHINGTON, PA. — 1809
GREEK CHURCH
1054
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
1534
1536
1536
ROME
PAGAN
DARK AGES
THE
NERO
AD 64
AURELIAN
A.D. 274
DIOCLETIAN
A.D. 303
A.D. 533
Pope made head of the Church
TRAJAN
A.D. 108
NORTH
SOUTH
1845
1830
PROT. M.E.
WESLEYAN
1784
M.E. CHURCH
1739
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.
DISSENT. CONGREGATIONAL
1833
Union 1871
E.ST. KIRK.
1560
N.
S.
1810
CUMB.P.
PRESBYTERIAN
BAPTIST
1639
FREE B.
1780
Genl. B.
LUTHERAN
1530
MENNONITE
NORTH
SOUTH
1845
1863
LEADING DENOMINATIONAL GROUPS OF THE UNITED STATES
METHODISTS, 17 SEPARATE BODIES
LUTHERANS, 16 " "
BAPTISTS, 13 " "
PRESBYTERIANS, 12 " "
MENNONITES, 12 " "
CATHOLICS, 7 " "
ADVENTISTS, 6 " "
TOTAL, 143 " "
INDEPENDENT, 150 Separate Congregations with no name or creed.
FROM A TABLE IN VOL. I. AMERICAN CHURCH HISTORY SERIES. SCRIBNERS.
REUNION ON THE WORD OF GOD
THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS REV 12. 1-6
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22
THE ORIGINAL OF THIS CHART FOR SALE BY MRS JNO H. REESE BANGOR MICHIGAN.

a renewed church was in prospect, a new world was being found for its occupancy.

4. *Martin Luther;* 1483-1546. Luther, the "sun" of a new day, was born in a miner's hut at Eisleben, Germany, Nov. 10, 1483. It is recorded that he was a model boy, but that he received fifteen floggings in one day at school. So much for the schools of his time. But the boy sang in the streets to obtain money and, by the help of his father, he received a good education. He was designed to be a great lawyer and spent seven years in the necessary studies. Almost by accident he got to reading the Latin Bible. Though his family were devoutly religious, he had never before seen a Bible—it was known only to the priests. The study of this book decided his course and he became a monk. His devotion to the Scriptures led him along the course of the others we have studied, and aroused the oppositions of Rome. But Luther had powerful friends among the German nobility and they saved him from the enemies of the truth. He translated the Bible into the German language and greatly influenced the whole nation. He died in 1546, in the town where he was born. The Lutheran denomination grew out of his work, though he said to his followers: "Call not yourselves Lutherans, but call yourselves Christians." It was not Luther's wish to originate a separate body of Christians.

5. *John Knox;* 1505-1572. Knox was a Scotchman and the father of Presbyterianism. It fell to this brave man to oppose Mary Queen of Scots, one of the most capable and most wicked of women rulers. She was a Romanist, and it was the work of this reformer to wrest from her the religious control of his country. The constant prayer of Knox was, "Lord, give me Scotland or I die," and it was said that Mary was "more afraid of John Knox and his prayers than of an army of men." At his death a leading nobleman, Earl of Morton, pointed to his coffin, and said: "There lies one who never feared the face of man."

6. *John Calvin;* 1509-1564. While studying law at Orleans, France, Calvin, then but a lad, came in contact with the Scriptures, and, finding them more to his taste, he turned to the study of religious subjects. He was a Catholic at this time, but very soon he joined the reformers and turned his influence to Protestantism. Calvin was not strong physically, but he was tireless in his work. Fifty-one large volumes of his writings have been published. No teacher of the Reformation has exerted a wider influence than that of Calvin. His first labors were performed in France, but he removed to Geneva, Switzerland, in 1536, where he lived till his death in 1564.

7. *John Wesley;* 1703-1791. Wesley was the son of an English clergyman. He came to young manhood at a time of great spiritual decay. He deplored the worldliness of the church. With his brother Charles and their schoolmates at Oxford, he adopted most rigid methodic rules of religious exercise. They read the Scriptures, meditated on their teachings and prayed with great regularity. They were nicknamed "Methodists." John Wesley lived and died in the Episcopal Church, but the Methodist Episcopal Church is the direct result of the labors of these young men. Wesley himself said: "Would God that all party names and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world were forgotten, and that we, as humble, loving

disciples, might sit down at the Master's feet, read his holy Word, imbibe his spirit and transcribe his life into our own."

II. Four Epochs of Reform—Progress.

The starting-point in the life of each reformer was a closer study of the Bible. In addition to this, which was common to all, each one laid special emphasis on some one doctrine. Four illustrious ones may be cited to show the steps by which the church climbed back to her lost position:

1. *Luther discovered the word of God* and gave it to the people. Others labored at this task, of course, but his part was pre-eminent.

2. *Calvin* found from the book that *God*, and not pope or council, *is to be supreme and sovereign.* He so preached this truth as to influence every succeeding age.

3. *Wesley* sought to be spiritual in his personal life, and therefore *emphasized the doctrine of God's indwelling.* It is said that ten millions are ministered to by the body of which he was the founder.

4. *The final step was the restoration* to its rightful place in Christian teaching *of the doctrine of the deity and authority of Jesus Christ.* This, it has been said, was the work of Alexander Campbell, a reformer of whom we have not before spoken, and to whose influence special reference will be made.

III. The Final Step—Restoration.

The leading bishop of the church at Rome was proclaimed "rector of the whole church," in 440 A. D. The title was repeated by Justinian in 553, when he declared the Bishop of Rome to be "lord of the whole church." This marks the beginning of a period referred to in Rev. 12: 1-6, and indicated on our chart as "The Church in the Wilderness." It was to continue "two hundred and threescore days." If, as is usual in Biblical symbolism, we take a day as a year, we would have a period of 1,260 years. This, added to 553, brings us down to 1793, at which time the church should begin to emerge from the shadows of error and temporal control.

At about this date there arose, in the New World, a simultaneous and wholly spontaneous movement looking to a restoration of the simple teachings, organization and service of the early church. Among instances of this singular uprising, the following may be cited:

1. *James O'Kelly*, a Methodist minister of North Carolina, founded a congregation with the Bible as a sufficient basis and guide; date 1795.

2. *B. W. Stone* and others of the Presyterian Church in Kentucky united to advocate the organization of churches on the Bible alone; date 1804.

3. *Abner Jones*, a Methodist, and Elias Smith, a Presbyterian, both of Vermont, joined their labors in seeking to restore an order of things that should be simply Christian; date 1808.

4. *Thomas and Alexander Campbell*, at first Presbyterians and afterward members of a church that was Christian only, but associated with Baptist congregations, constituted a church after the ancient order, at Washington, Pa., in 1809.

These churches were known simply as Christian churches. They did not understand the Scriptures alike, and their practices were not

uniform by any means. They did not know of the existence of each other. They were the pioneers of a restoration movement, the magnitude of which they could not even imagine.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Essay, "The Life and Work of Wycliffe," or, "Martin Luther the Man." Material can be found in any good cyclopedia.
2. Why did not Martin Luther proceed further in the matter of Scriptural teaching?
3. Did Luther or Wesley mean to establish a church?
4. Debate: "*Resolved,* That the Bible is not a sufficient guide in faith and practice."
5. Is there anything in the Bible that is not the word of God?

LESSON XX. THE RESTORATION

The movement we are now to consider has a significance of its own. It stands alone among the influences leading back to the lost faith of the early church.

1. It is *distinctly American* in origin.
2. It *presents no new doctrines,* but groups and relates the essential truth held by all Christian bodies.
3. *It is all-inclusive in its aim,* seeking, most of all, the benefit of the whole church by means of the union of all God's people, and, least of all, the making of a great name and place for itself.
4. But perhaps the most vital distinction is that, while others sought to restore by reformation, *it seeks to reform by restoration.* This idea will receive further attention in the present lesson.

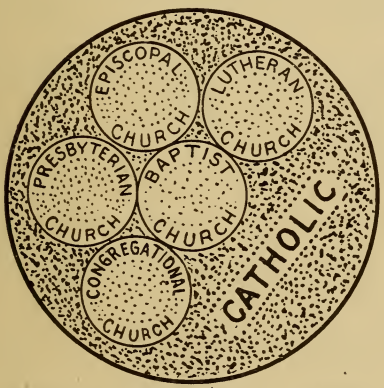
We have seen how the impulse to find a common basis on the word of God began to stir the hearts of Christian men here and there at the beginning of the present century. We count that the first church of the New Testament order was established at Washington, Pa., in 1809. It should not be forgotten that efforts looking in this direction had been made in various localities earlier than this. Nor should we fail to remark that the church at Washington was but the nucleus of a ferment of unrest which did not take permanent form and direction until some years later.

In 1818 "the church professing obedience to the faith of Jesus Christ, assembling together in New York," sent out a circular letter "to the churches of Christ scattered over the earth to whom this communication may come." This letter, after setting forth the origin and practice of the congregation in New York, then seven years old, concludes with these words:

> There are, scattered over this continent, a few small societies who have conformed in part to the simplicity of apostolic faith and practice. We have also addressed to such a similar epistle, and, should you favor us with your correspondence, we purpose, if the Lord will, to make known the result of this our communication, to all whom we shall have reason to esteem disciples of the Lord Jesus.
>
> The date of your coming together, the number of members, whether you have elders and deacons, together with any additional information, will be very acceptable to the church that thus addresses you.

THE CHURCH, 1500.—BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

THE CHURCH, 1600.—DENOMINATIONS FORMING.



THE CHURCH, 1800.—DENOMINATIONS MULTIPLYING.

THE CHURCH, 1900.—DENOMINATIONS BECOMING CHRISTIAN ONLY.

THE CHURCH IN PROCESS OF CHANGE.

THE CHURCH AS SHE MUST ULTIMATELY BE.

This letter, signed by two elders and three deacons, was sent to all churches known to be seeking the old paths. There were twenty-two responses. These, with an answer from the church in New York, were published in a small volume.

Thus, by degrees, the disciples of like faith and hope came to know each other. Gradually, and by a careful study of the Scriptures, agreement was reached as to the practices of the New Testament church. The simple message was new and popular. Very soon there were powerful evangelists ready to proclaim the truth. Whole congregations were often won to the "ancient order" and induced to become Christians only.

The growth of the Restoration movement has been almost marvelous. Nothing like it is known in religious history. It is now but a century old—a brief time, as religious history is reckoned—but it has grown from one church to fourteen thousand, and from a handful of members to a million three hundred thousand. Conversions are reported regularly at the rate of two to three thousand a week, and with each passing year the revival records of the past are discounted by new triumphs in evangelism.

In studying this greatest religious movement of the century, we will note the object in view, the plan adopted and the principles held.

I. The Object in View—The Reunion of Christendom.

1. *Divisions were many.* The Reformation was but a quest of truth. The followers of Luther seized upon the doctrines he emphasized and built a denomination around them. The same was true of other reforms. Following these precedents, each variation in doctrine had been made the excuse for a new denomination. The climax of confusion and disunion had been reached when the nineteenth century began and a tide of relief began to rise.

2. *Antagonisms were bitter.* God's people, who should have presented a solid front to evil, were exhausting their energies on each other. Heresy was the deadliest of sins, and, to each sectarian body, those who dared differ were heretics to be opposed to the last. The devices of torture were no more, but much of the spirit that prompted their use still survived. It was this woful state of the work that stirred the gentle hearts of men like Thomas Campbell, Barton W. Stone and Walter Scott, and caused them to set forth in quest of a remedy.

3. *The loss was appalling.* The needs of the New World were insistent, but the state of the church made response impossible. Two or three churches in a village, where one would be ample, was a standing reproach to the cause of Christ, and still is. A trio of preachers in one community, their work overlapping and their efforts counteracting each other, with the great beyond still unevangelized, was an unanswerable rebuke to the senselessness of sectarianism. A hundred years has made but little change in actual conditions, but this much has been gained, an unrest has been created and a remedy found.

II. The Plan Adopted—Restoration of the New Testament Faith and Order.

1. *Doctrine.* Great emphasis was laid on the necessity of right teaching. Appeal to the word of God was constantly made. That

BIBLE TEACHING ON BAPTISM

WHAT BAPTISM IS
- MATT. 28 : 18, 19.
- MARK 16 : 15, 16.

A POSITIVE DIVINE COMMAND.

WHAT BAPTISM IS FOR
- JOHN 3 : 3-5—ENTRANCE INTO KINGDOM.
- ACTS 2 : 38—REMISSION OF SINS—GIFT OF HOLY SPIRIT.
- ACTS 22 : 16—WASHING AWAY SINS.
- GAL. 3 : 26, 27—PUTTING ON CHRIST.
- 1 Pet. 3 : 19-21—SALVATION—ANSWER OF CONSCIENCE.

WHO MAY BE BAPTIZED
- MATT. 28 : 19—THOSE WHO CAN BE TAUGHT.
- ACTS 8 : 12—BELIEVERS—MEN AND WOMEN.
- ACTS 2 : 38—THOSE WHO REPENT.
- ACTS 8 : 36-38—THOSE WHO CONFESS CHRIST.

HOW IT IS PERFORMED
- MATT. 3 : 5, 6—IN WATER.
- JOHN 3 : 23—MUCH WATER.
- ACTS 8 : 38, 39—GOING DOWN INTO — COMING UP OUT OF.
- COL. 2 : 12—FORM OF BURIAL.
- ROM. 6 : 4, 5—FORM OF BURIAL AND PLANTING.

REWARDS OF OBEDIENCE
- JOHN 15 : 14—FRIENDS IF OBEDIENT.
- REV. 22 : 14—DOING GIVES RIGHT TO HEAVEN.

which could not be sustained by direct Scriptural precept or example was not enjoined on the churches. The teachings of the apostles were held to be equal with those of the Lord, and the examples of New Testament churches were eagerly studied. Definite Scriptural direction was required for all spiritual activities of individuals and of the church.

2. *Ordinances.* To use ordinances without abusing them, is a problem centuries old. It was solved by appeal to the Book. The two simple ordinances there taught and practiced were held in high honor and sacredly observed in all the churches. Baptism—a putting on of Christ—and the Supper—a commemoration of his sacrifices for men and a communion with him—were given due place and emphasis.

3. *Life.* Among these churches no less emphasis was laid on matters of life and duty. This must follow, of course, since the constant appeal was to that Book of books in which doctrine and life are ever correlated. The Christian character was a natural product of Christian teaching, and, as in the New Testament (Gal. 5: 22-24), the tree of a spiritual faith was known by its fruits. Great stress was laid on right living, and great care taken to save the cause from the reproach of unworthy members.

III. Basic Principles of the Plea.

1. *The authority of the Scriptures.* The new movement was no more and no less than an appeal to the Bible, rightly read, as the final source of authority in all matters religious. "Where the Scriptures speak we speak, and where the Scriptures are silent we are silent," early became the motto of the restorers.

In our own day it has been urged that Christ, and not the Book, should be our final appeal. The fallacy will appear when we recall that it is only by the Book that we know Christ. This modern plea is an illusion which but belittles the Scriptures without exalting Christ. "Show me a 'thus saith the Lord' for it," said the fathers, and this, with all that it implies of reverence for the Bible and the God it reveals, may well be our demand to-day.

2. *The pre-eminence of Christ.* The central place given to the person of Christ and the doctrines of his divinity was always prominent in the preaching of the fathers. A. Campbell's discourse on the coronation of the Messiah was said to be his best. As with the primitive disciples, Christ was all in all to them. They

(1) Believed on his name.
(2) Confessed his name.
(3) Were baptized into his name.
(4) Wore his name as individuals and as churches.
(5) Gladly suffered persecution in his name.
(6) Prayed to God in his name.
(7) Having served him in life, they died calling on his name.

3. *The work of the Holy Spirit.* They repudiated the idea then prevalent, and even yet held by some, that the Spirit intervenes in special revelation, independent of the Word, to communicate with men. "If this is God's method," they asked, "why does he not intervene and save all the heathen?" They urged the commands and promises, and plead with men to accept God's overtures of mercy.

4. *Other doctrines.*

(1) As to the Bible. The Old Testament was for the Jewish age; the New for the Christian in which we live (Gal 3: 23-29).

(2) As to the church. The church began on the day of Pentecost after our Lord's ascension (Acts 2: 1-47). Division in the church, which is Christ's body, is hurtful and party names divisive and sinful (John 17: 20, 21; 1 Cor. 1: 10-13). As the bride of Christ, the church should wear his name (Eph. 5: 24-27; Rom. 7: 1-4). His name is the only name acceptable to all the church.

(3) As to conversion. That God has elected to save "whosoever will" hear, believe and obey his gospel. That man comes to God by faith in which the intellect yields, repentance in which the affections are enlisted, and baptism in which the will submits to his rule.

This, in brief, was the gist of the Restoration movement, doctrinally considered. The message was clear and new. It fitted the nature and needs of men. Its success was natural and to be expected. It is no less powerful to-day. Men believe the Bible, and they instinctively honor the God and Saviour it reveals. They but need to be shown the abundant life as set forth in the gospel, and they will be won by its loveliness.

The mission of this movement is but barely begun. The people who hold it are the most virile and aggressive, the most free and fearless, the most earnest and courageous of all religious bodies. It is for us to take new grasp of our principles and go on to greater triumphs.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Would it be better, in the familiar expression, "Where the Scriptures speak we speak," to say, "Where *Christ* speaks we speak"? What would be the difference in the two statements?

2. Debate: "*Resolved*, That the Scriptures do not give preachers of the Word any power or privilege that does not belong as well to every disciple."

3. Would preachers be more influential with men if they dropped the title "Reverend" and wore clothes like other men?

4. Are the expressions "other churches" and "other denominations" allowable in the speech of those who profess to be Christians only?

5. What objection can be made to such terms as "Disciples Church" or "Disciples of Christ" or other designations marking Christians of the Restoration movement as a separate body?

PART V.

FIVE LESSONS ON CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Lesson XXI. The Christian Enterprise.
Lesson XXII. Christian Leadership.
Lesson XXIII. Training for Christian Leadership.
Lesson XXIV. Avenues of Christian Service.
Lesson XXV. Agencies of Christian Service.

LESSON XXI. THE CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE

The farmer impresses his personality on the farm he improves. The merchant thrusts his individuality into the enterprise he directs. The statesman enshrines his ideals in the institution he originates. It is but reasonable to expect that Christ would so impress his desire and personality upon the church that his aim would become her aim. And so, indeed, it was. In the very first glimpse we have of the early church, there stand out certain features first discovered in the life of Him who went about doing good, and these are to be reproduced a thousand-fold in her subsequent history.

It is the church of Christ, or Christ's church, we are studying. The church of to-day is widely different from that which he left in the world. Were we to judge of the place and purpose of the church by the program and proceedings of some modern religious societies, we would come far from the truth.

I. The Mission of the Church is Foreshadowed in the Life of Its Builder.

1. *Old Testament Scriptures cited by Him as describing his ministry* (Luke 4: 16-22). Here from his own lips we have his work described. It is to

(1) Preach good tidings to the poor.

(2) To proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind. To set at liberty them that are bruised.

(3) To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

2. *The plan of His ministry* (Matt. 4: 23; Acts 10: 38). It is here noted that

(1) He went about teaching in their synagogues.

(2) Preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

(3) Healing all manner of diseases.

3. *The directions given His disciples* (Matt. 10: 5-8; Luke 9: 1-6; Matt. 28: 16-20; Mark 16: 14-18). Here we have the plan of his own

ministry repeated in that of the disciples sent forth by him. They were to

(1) "Preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

(2) "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons."

(3) "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them. . . ."

The plan of His personal work then appears to have been a threefold appeal to man—healing the body, teaching the intellect, persuading the will.

II. The Mission of the Church as Set Forth in the Work of the Apostles and Their Associates.

1. *They healed the physical infirmities of men* (Acts 2: 43; 5: 12; 9: 32-42).

2. *They taught men the truth concerning Jesus Christ* (Acts 2: 32; 8: 12; 8: 35; 11: 19-21).

3. *They persuaded their hearers to submit their wills to Jesus Christ in two overt acts of obedience:*

(1) In the good confession (Acts 8: 37; Rom. 10: 9, 10; 1 Tim. 6: 12, 13).

(2) In baptism (Acts 2: 37-41; 8: 12; 8: 35-38; 18: 8).

The threefold method of Jesus reappears here also in the work of the apostles. They minister to the body, teach the intellect and appeal to the will by persuasive discourse.

III. The Mission of the Church as Exemplified in the Organization and Work of the First Disciples.

1. *They had care for the bodily needs of the poor among them* (Acts 2: 43-47).*

2. *They made the teaching service prominent* (Acts 2: 42; 4: 1, 2; 11: 26; 19: 8-10; 28: 30, 31).

3. *They relied on the preaching of the Word to win the souls of men.* It took both teaching and preaching to convert hearers (Acts 5: 42; 15: 35), but preaching—the public proclamation of the Word—was relied upon to move them to action (Acts 8: 5, 6; 9: 20-22; 1 Cor. 1 :21).

Thus it would appear that the early church but followed the leading of her Lord and the apostles to whom his work was committed.

The order of these ministries—healing, teaching and preaching—is not without significance. It is the sensible and uniformly successful one. They embrace the whole man—body, intellect and spiritual nature. They begin with the body, which is the one avenue of approach open alike in all men.

The familiar formula of evangelistic preaching—faith, repentance and baptism—did not rise by chance. It is the process by which the gospel message finds its way into the deepest recesses of a human being. By healing, the interest is gained; by teaching, facts that will produce faith are laid before the intellect; by preaching, motives that will cause repentance are urged upon the will. In baptism the whole

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*This is a special provision for a special need, in an age of extraordinary things for the church. But that due care was exercised constantly is seen by Acts 6 : 1, 2, 3 ; 2 Cor. 9 : 1, 12, 13 ; 1 Cor. 16 : 1.

being—body, soul and spirit—yields submission to Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

This is the mission of the church—to bring men to Christ. There is no better way than that of the New Testament—to heal, teach and preach. This order should be followed from the ministry of individual disciples to the management of great missionary movements on the world-field ministering to body, mind and soul. We should heal that we may preach, and preach that we may save. Said Paul:

> "For though I was free from all *men,* I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more. And to the Jews I became a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without the law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:19-22).

This was our Lord's mission: Paul learned it from him: well may we learn it and its method from Paul, for it is the mission of the church as an organization among men.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Does the ministry of the Lord—healing, teaching and preaching cover all the needs of mankind?
2. Is the church under obligation to render aid to the sick and needy? If so, how far?
3. Are almshouses and hospitals a fruit of Christianity? Should the church be expected to minister to *all* the destitute?
4. Topic for debate: "Resolved, That the fraternal orders do more good in a material way than does the church."
5. Which is the great work of the church—healing, teaching or preaching?

LESSON XXII. CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

The first requisite to success in any sort of enterprise is competent leadership. This the average Christian congregation does not have. The lack is not due to poverty, but to indifference and neglect. There are persons in the church who can lead, but the gospel crusade lags and languishes because

1. We have not, in any true measure, realized the greatness and importance of the work before us.

2. We have failed to develop the resources and enlist the forces that are ready for the Master's use. Here, as in other avenues of human endeavor, leadership belongs to men, and not to women, as has been assumed in much of our religious work. This will become evident, and the justice of it will appear, when we note that:

I. The Natural Endowments of Man Mark Him for Leadership.

1. *His physical strength makes him fittest to face the foes of his race and defend the frailer sex.* In earlier times this was an important factor in determining who should have precedence. Leadership in battle and in muscular labor falls to the strong most naturally.

Only in times of great distress did the women of Israel show active interest in the wars of the nation. Joan of Arc is the wonder of the centuries. The tribes that leave their drudgery to womankind soon become a byword among the nations. The church that follows a like course will have a like reward.

2. *The brain of man averages* 10 *per cent. larger than that of woman, and the blood-flow to the brain is proportionately greater.* This difference dates from the embryonic period, and seems therefore to be natural and not induced by conditions. This does not argue a lack of mental capacity in woman, nor an excess of it in man, for not the largest brain is most capable as a rule; but it does suggest a possible difference in adaptability. Man has a keener insight into new conditions; he is quicker to take the initiative; he is readier at invention; he is more accurate in reasoning from cause to effect; as a pioneer he goes before to grapple with difficulties and subdue dangers, while woman, with her gentler nature, follows to classify, arrange and harmonize what his prowess has acquired.

3. *In his emotional nature man is fitted for leadership.* With woman the sensibilities are often the safest guide; not so with men. In the realm where they move, the milder qualities must not be despised, but they are not dependable in every time of storm. Man, fortunately, is less apt to be swayed from justice and equity by appeals of sentiment than is woman. In Kingsley's "Westward Ho!" these significant remarks appear as part of an animated conversation:

"Your illustrious brother, sir, if you will pardon me, was a very great philosopher, but not so much of a general."

"General, sir! Where was braver man?"

"Not on God's earth, but that does not make a great general, sir. If Cortez had been brave, and nothing more, Mexico would have been Mexico still. The truth is, sir, Cortez, like my Captain Drake, knew when to hang a man and your brother did not."

4. *The will power of man qualifies him for leadership.* He faces difficulties that would appal woman. He delights in contests of strength and endurance and in competition with his fellows. Madam de Stael said that men err from selfishness and women from weakness. This great woman was "mannish" as well as cynical, but she comes near the truth that men excel in strength of volition, which is so essential to successful leadership.

II. In the Earlier Revealed Religions Leadership is Assigned to Men.

1. *In the three revealed religions—the Patriarchal, the Jewish and the Christian.* The latest and fullest may be seen in promise when we study the earliest and most primitive. Merging into each other, as they do, we may suppose that the place to be given men ultimately will be indicated at least in the earlier institutions.

We are not surprised, then, to learn that men led the worship of patriarchal times.

(1) The first persons to erect altars and offer gifts to God were men (Gen. 4: 3, 4).

(2) The message of warning before the deluge was entrusted to a man (Gen. 6: 13-22; 2 Pet. 2: 5).

(3) The first call to separation from idolatry was given to a man (Gen. 12: 1-3).

(4) The successive renewals of the covenant, first given to Abraham, were all to men (Gen. 26: 1-5; 28: 13, 14; 49: 1, 2).

2. *Men led in both civil and religious affairs during the Jewish age.*

(1) The great lawgiver of Israel, who acted as prophet, priest and king, was a man (Ex. 3: 1-6).

(2) The prophetic office, with but few exceptions, was filled by men (Ex. 7: 1; Deut. 34: 10; Luke 7: 28; 24: 19; Rev. 22: 9).

(3) The priests of Israel were all men (Ex. 40: 13-15).

(4) None but men sat upon the throne of the United Kingdom, or upon the thrones of either Judah or Israel, after the division.

(5) The sacred records were made and preserved by men. No book of the Old Testament is from other than a man's hand.

III. Positions of Prominence and Special Service in the Early Church were Generally Assigned to Men.

Note.—In nothing is the attitude of Jesus more in contrast with his times than in his treatment of womankind. The announcement of his advent was to a woman; the first full revelation of his personality was to a woman; his acts of tenderest compassion were to women; they followed him with their ministries and showed him hospitality in their homes; they were nearest his cross, last to leave his tomb, and first to return and meet the risen Lord. Surely, if women are to have the honor of special commission to service, it will be given now. But let us see:

1. *Those personally called and sent by the Lord are all men* (Matt. 4: 18-22; 9: 9; 10: 1-6; Luke 10: 1).

2. *The evangelists and preachers of the early church were all men* (Acts 2: 14-40; 4: 19, 20; 6: 8-11; 8: 5; 9: 10, 11, 12; 10: 1-6; 13: 1, 2).

3. *Official service in the congregation was committed to men* (Acts 6: 1-6; 20: 17, 18, 28; 1 Tim. 3: 1, 2, 12).

4. *However, there was a ministry of woman in the primitive church* the limitations of which are not clearly defined. Its divine enduement is indicated by Acts 2: 17, 18; and some of its activities by Acts 21: 9; Rom. 16: 1-7, 12, 15; Phil. 4: 2, 3.

These facts *do not argue that woman is inferior to man;* we know well that in many particulars she is his superior. They *do not bar her from positions of honor and service* in the church; in times of great need women must often save the cause from loss. They *do not prove the Bible a "man's book"* or this a "man's world;" what would either have been without the influence of women? They *do mark man for the work of leadership* in "His body, the church."

Subjects for Discussion

1. The masculine nature in the animal world. Wherein is the male superior and wherein the female?

2. The place of man in history. Time could be profitably spent in a twenty-minute debate of the question: "*Resolved*, That men have wielded a greater influence than women in our national development."

3. Is the use of physical force ever necessary or justifiable? What

is man's natural equipment for the defense of self and those dependent upon him?

4. In what lines of church work is the need of men most marked?

5. Is it true that woman is by nature more "spiritual" than man? Are we sure we know what constitutes spirituality?

LESSON XXIII. TRAINING FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

"We must educate, we must educate, or we must perish by our own prosperity." This was the warning note sounded by one of our great American orators. He was right. No organization, be it government, commercial institution or church, can prosper and endure without the service of trained minds. The work of our Lord is impoverished by the lack of competent leadership. Nor can it be urged that material for positions of responsibility is wanting. It but needs to be prepared.

Before we set out to remedy a defect we should be certain that we know what is needed. In education there is the real and the counterfeit. There are men of the schools who have completed heavy courses of study, who are failures; they are uneducated. There are men who have made "man their school and the world their college," and who are useful and successful; they are educated men. Let the children of light be wiser in this generation than the children of darkness.

1. To educate is to *draw out.* The educated man is one whose powers and talents are drawn out and cultivated.

2. The trained worker has a great advantage. He can render a better service, hence is more in demand.

3. Skilled service is dignified. There is small satisfaction in doing what any untrained laborer can do.

I. Training for the Common Activities of Life.

1. *The trades.* Of old, apprentices served one or two years, to learn a trade. Now the same work is required in schools where trades are taught.

2. *The professions.* Four years of college study are necessary for those who would receive the physician's diploma. Hospital and clinic work is required also. Those who would enter the employ of our Government are required to equip themselves for their work. The efficiency of our United States mail service is due to the standard of discipline maintained by the department. Those who hold office in secret societies must become competent for their tasks, and this they do by application and exercise.

3. *In all vocations.* In railroad work, civil service, mercantile pursuits, printing and stenography, the rule holds; there must be preparation for work whether done in school or shop, and the man whose hand or eye or mind is trained to a particular task, if it be a useful task, is in demand.

II. Training Needed for Service in the Church No Less than for Other Lines of Activity.

1. *The members and officers need it.* We are all plain people. We come into the church as raw, untrained recruits, some of us after reaching maturity. The work of elders and deacons is important, re-

quiring tact and skill. The attitude of members to their servants who lead is vital. So the need extends to the entire membership.

2. *The task in hand demands it.* Not every disciple, however willing, can render profitable service. To the church our Lord has committed his great, unfinished work of saving a world. Its importance calls for the best in us.

3. *The delicacy of the work makes it imperative.* The righting of lives, the perfecting of souls, the carrying of truth to the lost—these are tasks for those whose training has been of the very best.

III. Scriptural Precedent for Special Training.

1. *Old Testament examples.*

(1) Abraham called from his people to another land (Gen. 12: 1-3).

(2) Moses reared in Pharaoh's court (Acts 7: 20-22).

(3) Samuel brought up by Eli the high priest (1 Sam. 2: 18).

(4) David spent ten years in Saul's court before becoming king.

2. *In the ministry of Jesus.*

(1) The twelve apostles (Mark 3: 13-15; Acts 1: 2, 3).

(2) The three—Peter, James and John (Luke 8: 51-56; Matt. 17: 1, 2).

(3) The one—Peter (Matt. 14: 28-31; John 13: 5-10; John 21: 15-19).

3. *In apostolic days* (Acts 18: 24-26; 2 Tim. 2: 2; 3: 14-17).

The work of the church is the most important concern of the human race. It should be carried on with intelligence. The men who conduct the affairs of lodge, society, trades union and political party, or other men of equal talents, can give honor and dignity to the body of Christ when they will give due attention to the matter. Training will give proficiency, and proficiency will inspire self-confidence, and, as the work opens, it will become a joy and an honor, giving richness to individual life.

Subjects for Discussion

1. How far is education a matter of books and schools? Is it possible for one to educate himself for a place of usefulness independent of schools and colleges?

2. Can a thing be *rightly learned* without putting it into actual practice? How far is *doing* a factor in learning?

3. What advantage has the skilled specialist over the common laborer?

4. In what department of our church life is the greatest need of training manifest?

LESSON XXIV. AVENUES OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Christians are "the light of the world," the salt of the earth. The light is made evident and the salt effective for good when Christians are active in carrying out the Lord's will.

The ministry of Jesus Christ to the body, mind and spirit of man was interrupted by his death. Soon after there sprang up a group of disciples called at the first the "way" and afterward "the church," which engaged itself to carry on to completion what he had begun. This body Paul refers to several times as "the body of Christ," repre-

senting Him as the head from which direction proceeds, and Christians as members of the body to engage in carrying out his will.

The sole design and purpose of the church is to so finish what he began as to extend the gospel ministries to all men and to merit his approval on the work done. This task he has assigned to his disciples, leaving the development of detail to be worked out by them. They may work as separate individuals, as churches or as groups and associations of individuals, devising such means as times and circumstances may demand. It must be borne in mind, however, that no form of co-operation is to be tolerated if it fails of complete harmony with the plan revealed in the New Testament.

I. Individual Work.

1. *All disciples should heal*—aid in ministering to the bodies of others. Opportunities to render physical aid are open doors for Christian influence. Help given in the right spirit, at such a time, is a sure avenue to mind and heart.

2. *Every disciple is privileged to teach.* There are no privileged classes or priestly orders in the New Testament church. The extent of one's ability is the only limit of his privilege to serve in the ministry of teaching. Almost every disciple can teach. The facts of the Christian faith are few; the evidence that supports them is plain and direct. Ordinary intelligence and reasonable study of the plan of salvation is a sufficient equipment to begin with; skill comes with practice. Jesus encouraged all disciples to study the truths of the Spirit, and sent forth plain, unschooled men to evangelize the world. In the church at Jerusalem there were many disciples able to teach, and there should be in every church.

3. *Any disciple may preach if he can do so acceptably.* The New Testament grants no privilege to preachers that is not also granted to every disciple. But, amid the multiplicity of Christian activities, some public duties, for the sake of good order, would better be done ordinarily by those who give themselves wholly to the ministry of the gospel.

II. Congregational Work.

1. *Christians are grouped into congregations for wise purposes.* Some kinds of work can be better done by co-operation than by individual effort. By co-operation for certain purposes each individual is made to count for more than he would alone. Efforts and contributions of individuals which, if given alone, could not avail much, when rendered collectively become powerful. Ministries, which might otherwise be neglected, the congregation can commit to competent persons, and thus carry on with effectiveness. Laboring together, disciples benefit by each other's failures and successes, and render much assistance to each other when trials come.

2. *With the grouping of disciples, new relations and obligations rise.* The body will have certain material affairs to be directed. Out of this necessity grew the deaconate in the early church (Acts 6: 1-6).

3. *Out of the new association would also rise new problems.* The body would need to be taught and controlled. For this service, elders were appointed. In the early church the elders were bishops or pastors. Their work has, in most cases, been gradually delegated to one

whom we call the "pastor." The New Testament order should be restored and maintained in the churches.

III. Co-operative Work.

1. *Scriptural precedent.* The disciples church at Antioch sent missionaries to preach elsewhere (Acts 13: 1-3), and others contributed to their support (Phil. 4: 15, 16). The disciples and churches of Galatia and at Corinth made offerings for the needy brethren in Judæa and sent them by Paul (1 Cor. 16: 1-4).

2. *Limitations of co-operation.* No one can deny the right of disciples in a given congregation or in different localities to join in Christian work in any way that may seem wise. But it is a *co-operation* of disciples rather than of churches, and for no other purpose than to promote Christian work; no company of representatives or brethren gathered together for any purpose can exercise authority over the churches or legislate on matters of teaching. Authority is from Christ and his apostles in the Scriptures, and the teachings of the gospel there given are the final source of appeal. To attempt to delegate control or direction in anything other than the gospel ministries, or in these so as to in any way hinder or interfere with Christian congregations, is to return to denominational ground.

3. *Forms of co-operative work.*

(1) Hospitals where healing may be carried on.

(2) Schools where teaching may be done.

(3) Missionary organizations formed to promote the preaching of the gospel.

The advisability of Christians joining in co-operative endeavor has been questioned. Many of those who are simply Christian refuse to engage in such enterprises, but continue to labor as individuals and as churches. Indeed, where members of a congregation have been enlisted in a particular enterprise, much larger results have been made possible. No particular method of work can be made a test of loyalty to Christ among New Testament Christians.

There are some splendid examples of individual enterprise among those who are simply Christian. Many congregations now support their own missionary on the home or foreign field, and some have assumed special obligation in behalf of schools and hospitals. It is to be hoped that the spirit of freedom among us will permit of, and stimulate to, many more spontaneous outcroppings of zeal for good works.

With a field so large and needs so numerous, whoever and whatever does the work of our Lord may be gladly welcomed.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Is there anything official in the work to be done by the disciples of our Lord; *i. e.*, anything that requires a special official endorsement or credential for the worker?

2. Name three types of Christian service and give several examples of each as carried on in our own day.

3. What is the purpose of the Christian congregation? Why not each disciple work to himself?

4. For debate: "*Resolved,* That all co-operation for Christian work should be of disciples and not of congregations."

LESSON XXV. AGENCIES OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Jesus did not waste time discussing methods or laying plans. Each generation, and often each individual, would need a plan different from all others. To fire human hearts with his purposes would be sufficient; where a will is, a way will be found. It is safe to assume, in such a case, that the plan which best executes his wish will be most pleasing to him. There was no set formula of words by which healings were performed, and no essential set of circumstances under which the gospel could be preached. Miracles might accompany the apostolic ministry, or they might not; gospel truth could be taught by a learned apostle or by the wife of an obscure tentmaker; the Word could be preached in a gorgeous temple or in the open air by a riverside beyond the city limits (Acts 16: 13).

The plans herein set forth, and those of the succeeding lesson, are but suggestive. They indicate the progress we have made thus far. They are such paths as have been found by what is called "our organized work." As the varying needs of each generation may demand, new and better methods will be devised and adopted. Already many larger churches and many individuals have seen fit to seek out needy fields and "fall to" with a will on their own responsibility. Many and diverse plans of co-operation have been tried, some of which have failed and fallen into disuse, while others, that have served well, are still in operation. The most prominent provisions that have been made for the general co-operation of disciples and churches in carrying on the work of the Lord may be arranged as follows:

I. The Work of Healing. (Benevolences.)

1. *Hospital and Dispensary Work.* This ministry is as yet confined largely to the foreign field. Two reasons may be assigned for this: first, the general influence of Christianity has already done much in civilized countries—brotherhoods and governments make some provision for the sick and injured; secondly, such work in heathen countries is the surest way to the confidence of the untaught. In the year ending Sept. 30, 1910, the Foreign Christian Missionary Society supported twenty-one hospitals and dispensaries, ministering to 182,768 patients. The Christian Woman's Board of Missions operates fifteen hospitals and dispensaries, treating 100,000 patients annually.

2. *Homes for the Helpless.* This ministry is carried on both at home and abroad, chiefly by the following societies:

(1) The National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church, St. Louis, Mo. This society operates and sustains several homes for orphans and the aged, one of which has hospital accessories and a nurses' training-school; this society is now establishing a Christian hospital in Kansas City, Mo.

(2) The Christian Woman's Board of Missions, 152 E. Market St., Indianapolis, Ind. Through the work of the organization of the sisters, six orphanages, with forty-five children, are operated, all on the foreign field.

3. *Relief for Aged Ministers.* The Board of Ministerial Relief, 120 E. Market St., Indianapolis, Ind. This Board has as its high aim the

provision of a fund the interest of which will render needed aid to ministers of the Word who may have reached the time of retirement not having private means sufficient for their support.

II. The Work of Teaching. (Educational.)

1. *The greatest factor here is the Christian home.* What our home-makers desire the future of the race to be, they can make it. The most important sowing is that in the tender years of childhood. Unfortunately, many homes do not exert a distinctively Christian influence over the young lives in them.

2. *Next to the home is the Bible school of the local church.* Here, considering the brief bit of time the pupils are assembled, the results are little short of wonderful. It is only recently that the value of this agency is being appreciated, and even now its possibilities are but dawning on us. In the work of the Bible schools are boundless possibilities to be wrought out.

3. *The Christian college.* Too often earlier influences of the home and Bible school are destroyed by worldly associations and skeptical views encountered at college. Such loss is irreparable. Any expense that provides against this is justifiable. The Christian college begins with education where the home and Bible school left off, aiming to provide environment for a normal and symmetrical unfolding of the whole life. It may be required of our colleges that they give an account of the trust committed to them and of Christian people that they render adequate support to the schools that are worthy.

Our oldest school is Bethany College, Bethany, W. Va., founded by A. Campbell in 1841. Others are doing important work in Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Iowa, Tennessee and other States farther West.

4. *Mission schools.* It has been found that easier access can be had to the heathen mind if the word of God be taught by Christian teachers along with other studies. Hence, common day schools are a part of the foreign work. The C. W. B. M. has thirty-eight such schools with 2,300 pupils in attendance, and the Foreign Society supports fifty-six schools and colleges with an attendance of 4,095.

5. *The religious newspaper.* The religious newspaper has a distinct place. It serves as a means of communication between disciples for dissemination of religious doctrine and information, and to record the progress of the gospel. The movement to restore New Testament Christianity, though of comparatively recent origin, has developed a vigorous journalism. Beginning with the *Christian Baptist*, edited by Alexander Campbell, there are now scores of papers devoted to our plea.

III. The Work of Preaching. (Evangelistic.)

Note.—All Christian service is missionary, and all missionary work is, in a way, preaching, hence, to assume that preaching alone is missionary work, is not strictly accurate, but, for purposes of classification, we will allow it to stand so. We have in operation at the present time the following societies whose purpose is to preach the gospel of Christ to the unsaved:

1. *State and district missionary societies* working in different States.

2. *The American Christian Missionary Society*, organized in 1849,

with offices in Cincinnati, O., for work in the United States and Canada.

3. *The Board of Church Extension*, organized in 1883, with headquarters at Kansas City, Mo., to assist new or weak churches in the erection of suitable houses of worship.

4. *The Foreign Christian Missionary Society*, with headquarters at Cincinnati, O., organized in 1875.

5. *The Christian Woman's Board of Missions*, of Indianapolis, Ind., organized in 1874, doing work in both home and foreign fields.

Such are the more important of our organized agencies for extending the kingdom of heaven. Important as they are, they are but agencies. They are deserving of support and co-operation, so far as they serve the purposes for which they were called into being—the extension of New Testament Christianity—but may be dispensed with when better means of doing work are to be had.

Such agencies must not be allowed to take the place of individual or congregational interest and endeavor. Their existence is in no way a bar to any good impulse or enterprise that may be in the heart of any man. The field for individual and congregational effort was never wider than to-day. Some of our most notable work is being done by those who have discovered a needy field and gone to work for the Lord, independent of any organization.

There are many independent missions, and the number is growing and will grow. J. M. McCaleb, W. D. Cunningham, A. E. Seddon and others have shown themselves workmen that need not be ashamed. It is the right of each disciple and each congregation to contribute to any or all of these as may seem wise and expedient.

We have but begun. There are many calls to all of our boards that can not be answered, and the harvest is ripening everywhere. Doubtless the agencies we have will adjust themselves to the need of the times from year to year—new methods of work will come into vogue; individual endeavor will become more frequent and fervent; but with all the rise and development of means and methods, our one aim to carry the knowledge and ministry of the Lord to all men must be constantly before us, and while it is we will be a great people in his hands.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Why have agencies? Why not leave each disciple to do as seems best to him?

2. Are missionary societies a part of the church or are they instruments with which to labor?

3. Should missionary societies decide what congregations shall give them or vice versa? Which is the natural order?

4. Can the churches exercise authority over missionary agencies or vice versa? If not, why not?

5. Name five agencies that are serving churches that are Christian only and give their respective addresses.

6. What advantage has independent mission work over that of societies, if any?

7. Are churches missionary societies? To whom was the great commission given, to churches or to individuals?

PART VI.

FIVE LESSONS ON CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Lesson XXVI. A Kingdom of Servants.
Lesson XXVII. The Ministry of Apostles.
Lesson XXVIII. The Ministry of Elders.
Lesson XXIX. The Ministry of Deacons.
Lesson XXX. The Ministry of Disciples.

LESSON XXVI. A KINGDOM OF SERVANTS

Every Christian is a servant of others for Christ's sake. His business is so to know the Master and so to possess the Master's spirit as to find joy in the service that would occupy the Lord were he here.

But every Christian is also a leader. In some avenue of life, though a very humble one it may be, and for some group of fellow-servants, he is the leader. To serve and to lead—the service of leading others and leadership in serving others—is the sum total of Christian duty. The logical beginning point for a series of lessons on Christian leadership, therefore, is ministry or service.

As regarded in our day, a "minister" is one specially set apart and often clothed in garments of particular style, whose business it is to direct the "services" of the church—a sort of general head to a congregation of Christians. The New Testament meaning of the word is widely different from this. Jesus said, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant," and the marginal rendering of the word "servant," as shown in the American Standard Revision, is "minister." This word is from the Greek *diakonos*, the same word elsewhere rendered "deacon," and it means a servant, or one who labors for others.

The kingdom of Jesus Christ is represented in the world by the church made up of his disciples. It is unlike every other earthly establishment in this, that it is based on service:

1. *The King himself was among us as one who served* (Luke 22: 27), and himself gave the world's most illustrious example of condescension (John 13: 2-15).

2. *Willingness to lose self in service is a condition of discipleship* (Matt. 16: 24, 25).

3. *The only greatness his disciples may seek is that which comes of pre-eminence in service* (Matt. 20: 25-27).

This distinction between the rule of Christ among men and the rule of earthly kings is basic and indispensable. When the ambition

to serve has possessed the church, she has had true power and prestige. Lacking this, no earthly possession can make her existence worth while. Christian service is her badge and birthright, which, if she relinquish at any price, leaves her poor indeed.

God is a God of order. The worlds of his universe move with a marvelous precision. Night and day succeed each other, seasons come and go, eclipse and conjunction of heavenly bodies occur with an accuracy unknown in the plans of man. It would be but reasonable to expect order in any organization divinely approved. Therefore we are not surprised to read that "he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4: 11, 12). Here we have the differing needs of the church supplied by the services of those whose gifts differ, but all are servants bound to one Master under one law of service.

The order of the New Testament ministry, then, would be (1) apostles, (2) prophets, (3) evangelists, (4) shepherds and teachers, and (5) to these may be added the numerous class referred to in the New Testament as scribes, or merely as ministers, who serve in miscellaneous ways. This order was foreshadowed in the Old Testament, where we see priests, prophets, and, in the synagogue of later Jewish times, elders and scribes, with many who rendered assistance in the temple service.

Taking up the classes of those who minister, in the order given, we have:

I. Apostles. Any one sent forth on a mission may be regarded as an apostle. Barnabas was an apostle *of the church at Antioch* (Acts 14: 14). Jesus chose twelve men from his earliest followers "whom he named apostles" (Luke 6: 13). These were given particular instructions during his earthly ministry, so that they might be qualified to go forth and witness for him after the resurrection. At Pentecost they received a special endowment of power authorizing them to act as spokesmen for Christ, enabling them to speak with tongues, and giving power to confer gifts of the Spirit to others. The apostolic ministry was for a particular age. The need having passed, the apostolic office has ceased. There are no apostles of Jesus Christ in our day.

II. Prophets. The prophetic office extended beyond the apostolic group and, doubtless, also beyond the apostolic age (Acts 11: 27, 28; 13: 1; 15: 32; 21: 9). These prophets assisted very materially in the establishment of the early church by disclosing, in many instances, that which could not have been known by human intelligence, and by unveiling the secret intents of men, thus impressing the fact of the divine care then exercised in a special way. Paul said, "Whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13: 8), and this seems to have been fulfilled in our day, for, though there be some who claim to be prophets, convincing proofs are always wanting.

III. Evangelists. The evangelist is one who proclaims glad tidings; this is indicated in the derivation of the name itself. The whole congregation might assist in spreading the gospel message, of course, and seems to have done so, but there were some who, because of this being

their special task, were called "evangelists." These evangelists of the early church, as will be seen by Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, were (1) exemplary men (1 Tim. 6: 11), (2) willing to sacrifice for the gospel (2 Tim. 2: 3, 4), (3) wise in shaping the affairs of a congregation, and (4) competent and faithful in teaching their hearers the way of life (Tit. 2: 1-8). Evangelists, as we see them in the New Testament, were to preach the Word, establish new congregations and set in order those that were in need of direction. This done satisfactorily in any community, the evangelist went on to other fields. If, in any case, he "located" as "pastor," the record does not tell us of it, though the extent and needs of a field might justify a prolonged stay in one place.
in one place; indeed Paul himself spent considerable periods in certain great centers.

IV. Shepherds and Teachers. These are but two names for the office of elder or bishop; they indicate—the first figuratively and the second literally—the work to be done by these spiritual overseers of the congregation. Their ministry is of greatest importance, but since it is discussed in a separate lesson it will be sufficient in this place to refer to it in its order.

One writer,* in discussing the teaching service of the early church, thinks that "it is just possible that 'teachers' were sometimes recognized who were officially neither 'prophets' nor 'evangelists' nor 'elders,' but simply 'teachers,' and nothing more" (citing Acts 13: 1 and 1 Cor. 12: 28, 29 in support of the view). He agrees, however, that the "teachers" here referred to may have been elders conspicuous for their attention to this work. The same writer remarks that, "in any case, it must have been competent to the shepherds of any Christian congregation to call to their side 'helpers' or 'assistants' in any department of their multifarious duties, as well as special 'pilots' or 'counselors' to assist them to steer through every storm."

V. Scribes. The scribe of the Old Testament, or of the age preceding our Lord's appearance, was one whose chief business it was to promote reverence for the law, and make it an essential part of the nation's life. They transcribed the law, hence were called "scribes;" they taught it to the people and were therefore called rabbis, or teachers; they interpreted the law somewhat as does an attorney, so that in our Lord's time they were referred to as lawyers. The office included a great variety of duties, such as are commonly parceled out to preacher, teacher, author, scholar, lawyer and magistrate. It is easy to see how a scribe might claim the right to do almost anything, and how also, by discretion and integrity, he might come to have almost unbounded influence. The office came into disrepute, for, of course, its power was abused by unworthy men. Jesus denounced the scribes of his time, and counseled his disciples to avoid even titles by which they were called. But he also said: "Every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old," and again, to the religious leaders of the Jews: "Behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them shall ye kill

*Jos. B. Rotherham, in "Christian Ministry."

and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city."

These passages do not indicate the establishment of an office, or order, of "scribes" in the then future church, but we are not to conclude, therefore, that they are without meaning. It is evident that our Lord intended every disciple to use his talent in gospel service, and he has left his work so ordered that none need be idle. It is often asserted by him that the commonest service will be appreciated (Matt. 10: 42).

Emphasis should be laid on the matter of voluntary, unscheduled and unofficial ministry in the name of Christ. The greatest services ever rendered have been such, and efficient servants of Christ have been those who, from choice or from necessity, labored outside of any "official" bounds. The words of that master scribe, J. B. Rotherham, may well be quoted here:

> And so opens a chapter in the story of our faith which is not likely to be closed while the present dispensation endures. If to mere copyists we add judges or critics of the value of exemplary documents, and to copyists and critics we add translators (for what is a translator but a copyist of the sense of a writing into another tongue?), and if to copyists, critics and translators we further add editors and printers, it may begin to dawn upon us what a vast company of "ministers of the Word" can be comprehended under the simple name "scribes."
>
> But for "scribes" we should have had no Bible; in plain terms, other 'ministers of the Word" would have had no Word to minister. And but for the conscientious, painstaking, monotonous, persevering and largely unremunerated labors of "scribes," our Bible would have been full of transcriptural errors; instead of being, as it is, the best preserved and well-nigh the most faithfully translated book in the world.

We are members of a great brotherhood, a brotherhood in which, by the counsel of our Elder Brother, each one is to count the other better than himself, and each one to look not to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. We are partners in a great enterprise, with Christ as its head; each one deals directly with the Lord himself and not with some "superior," who is also a subordinate; one is our Master, even Christ. We are citizens of a great empire, the enduring principle of which is service for love's sake. We are a kingdom of servants, and our King, basin in hand and girt about with a towel, stands in the shadow of the cross, our peerless Leader in the new crusade for the salvation of the race. Men saved by the service of other consecrated lives can not but become the saviors of others. We are to save and be saved by service.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Wherein does the kingdom of Christ differ from all other kingdoms? Cite instances illustrating the Christian law of greatness through service.
2. Name the orders of Christian ministers enumerated by Paul and treated in this lesson.
3. For debate: "*Resolved*, that a professional clergy is out of harmony with the spirit of Christ and the gospel."
4. Why is the teaching service a ministry of great importance to the church?

5. Wherein do our plans for service in the church to-day differ from those set forth in the New Testament?

LESSON XXVII. THE MINISTRY OF APOSTLES

"First apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, healings, helps, counsels and tongues." This, Paul tells us (1 Cor. 12: 28), was the order of ministries in the early church. It was not by accident that he placed the apostolic office first. Its relative importance would not permit it to be otherwise classified.

The apostolic ministry was inclusive of all others. Apostles were not above "serving tables" as deacons were afterward appointed to do (Acts 6: 1-6); they visited from house to house, teaching and admonishing as elders are exhorted to do (Acts 20: 20, 35); they preached the gospel after the manner of evangelists (Acts 14: 21, 22), and they prophesied as did others in the church, to whom it was given to exercise the prophetic gift (Acts 20: 29, 30; 2 Thess. 2: 1-5).

But there was a work which was theirs exclusively, and it was this work, and the authority that was theirs from the Lord, that gave them prestige and influence. On at least two occasions Paul found it necessary to defend his claims as an apostle (1 Cor. 9: 1; 2 Cor. 11: 5). It would seem that his abundant labors in the gospel had caused some to lose sight of his apostolic authority, which was his real credential among the churches. Paul protests not for his own sake, but for the sake of "his gospel."

A scholarly (?) minister, when referred to Peter's utterance on Pentecost, said: "What do I care what Peter said? I would rather have Jesus' word for it than that of all the apostles together." Was his statement justified? The cry, "Back to Christ," so often heard in our day, is taken by some as refusal to receive testimony from any save the Lord himself. The place of the apostles is so significant, and yet so misunderstood by Bible students, that we can not pass the subject without emphasis.

I. The Apostolic Ministry Required Special Equipment.

1. *They had three years of training with the Lord.* Mark says that the twelve who were "named apostles" were chosen "that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3: 14). The three years of our Lord's earthly ministry was not a mere incident. He had a message for the race—the most vital ever received by man. It had to be imparted by human agency. The choice and training of the men who were to direct the gospel enterprise in its beginnings was of utmost importance to the system. For three years the twelve were with Him in every intimate relation; if ever men had opportunity to know another, it was in this case. It is evident that they so understood His plans, for when they sought for one to fill the place of Judas, only those who had companied with them "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out" among them, "beginning with the baptism of John," were considered eligible (Acts 1: 21, 22). Then, later, when Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was chosen, he did not go to his work at once, nor did he seek instruction from the other apostles;

THE GREAT TRANSACTION OF THE AGES

THE DIVINE OFFER

- **FATHER**
  - PLANS WITH WISDOM.
  - EXECUTES WITH POWER.
  - OFFERS IN LOVE.
- **SON**
  - SETS EXAMPLE IN LIFE.
  - MAKES ATONEMENT IN DEATH.
  - GIVES HOPE IN RESURRECTION.
- **HOLY SPIRIT**
  - GUIDES APOSTLES INTO ALL TRUTH.
  - CONFIRMS THEIR TEACHING.
  - COMFORTS CHRISTIANS.

HUMAN ACCEPTANCE

- **APOSTLES**
  - TESTIFY CONCERNING CHRIST.
  - PROCLAIM TERMS OF PARDON.
  - RECORD REVEALED TRUTH.
- **CHURCH**
  - MAINTAINS THE ORDINANCES.
  - SUPPORTS THE WORD OF TRUTH.
  - INVITES SINNERS TO CHRIST.
- **WORLD**
  - BELIEVES JESUS IS THE CHRIST.
  - REPENTS FROM SIN.
  - OBEYS THE GOSPEL COMMANDS.

but, in his own words, he "went away into Arabia," returning to Jerusalem by way of Damascus *three years* later (Gal. 1: 15-19).

2. *They were given authority to represent the Lord on earth.* This is first named to the one who first declared that he was "the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. 16: 16-19), and afterward repeated to the others (Matt. 18: 18). Just before his departure, at a meeting appointed by the Lord himself, the matter of his authority was given particular emphasis; immediately then he gave them command to go into all the world, preaching his word, and promised to be with them to the consummation of the age.*

3. *They were specially endowed for their work.* When the eleven received from our Lord the commission to preach the gospel "in his name unto all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24: 45-49), he added these notable words, "But tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high." This command and promise is to the apostles, and to them alone. They had a special and tremendous work before them; nothing short of divine guidance would make them equal to the task.

The promise is renewed after the resurrection (Acts 1: 5, 8), and the assurance given that the time of special equipment was "not many days hence."

The fulfillment of these promises came as specified at Jerusalem, not many days after the ascension of Jesus (Acts 2: 1-13), and concerning it we may note that

(1) It was a "baptism"—the room where they were sitting was "filled" (v. 2).

(2) The Spirit manifested his presence by visible and audible tokens (vs. 2, 3).

(3) The apostles were "filled with the Holy Spirit," and began to "speak with other tongues" (vs. 4-11).

Once, afterward, at the household of Cornelius (Acts 10: 44-46), the Spirit's presence was made evident to the physical senses of those present. This, as will be seen by a careful reading of the connection, was to signify God's acceptance of the Gentiles. Any one claiming to have received the baptism of the Spirit in our day should be asked to produce the evidence by speaking in other tongues, or by exercising the gifts possessed by the apostles (Acts 2: 43; 8: 14-19; Heb. 2: 3, 4).

II. The Apostolic Ministry was Temporary.

1. *The age in which the apostles lived was one of supernormal activities in the church.* But for apostolic direction, God's gifts would have been misused, if not abused, and the church would have been made the victim of wicked and designing men. Paul understood that the day of miracles and signs was to be of short duration (1 Cor. 13: 8). With the institution of a management, regular and ordinary, the supernormal ministry ceased.

2. *The need of special guidance was temporary.* The early church has been compared to a ship which is pulled out of a harbor by tugs; when in the open sea, her own machinery is put in motion and she goes on alone. The organization had to be perfected and truth for

*Such is the meaning of the word translated "world" in Matt. 28: 20.

future guidance revealed; this done, a specially endowed ministry was no longer needed.

3. *The work the apostles were to do was perfected.* Their commission was threefold:

(1) They were to bear witness to the facts concerning Christ.

(2) They were to receive and impart additional truth as needed.

(3) They were to be commissioners for the Lord to all parts of the earth.

All of this they did with a zeal and faithfulness that counted no sacrifice too great. One by one, they finished their tasks and laid aside the garments of earthly toil for the robes of the redeemed, and, as the apostolic hand was loosed from the helm, others—"faithful men"—who were "able to teach others also," became leaders in the congregations and God's great work of saving the world was well begun.

III. The Apostolic Ministry was Indispensable.

It filled a place between the personal ministry of our Lord and the normal life of his church in the earth, through which the truth he had imparted could scarcely have survived, without extraordinary care. Besides this, the revelation God had made to man was safeguarded in various ways by their service.

1. *They bore personal witness to certain facts, upon which the faith of Christians in all ages was to rest* (Acts 1: 8; 2: 32; 3: 15; 5: 32; 10: 39-41; 13: 30, 31; 26: 16). (All of these passages should be read with care.) Naturally the generation immediately following that in which our Lord lived would most emphatically challenge his claims, yet the apostolic testimony silenced all objectors (Acts 4: 10-14). The Jews, having repudiated him, would be most strenuous in their opposition to the testimony of his chosen witnesses, yet for several years the gospel was not preached to any but Jews, and its triumphs among them were almost marvelous; of all places, Jerusalem would be the most unfriendly to the new message, and yet upon the first affirmations of the apostles, three thousand were moved to acceptance in the *Jewish temple at Jerusalem, fifty days after the crucifixion.* The effectiveness of the apostolic testimony is thus made evident.

2. *They provided leadership and a source of appeal for other ministers of the early church.* The church is setting forth as a new vessel on an untried sea; if she can get safely past the reefs and rocks of that perilous age in which she is launched, she will no doubt survive all subsequent storm and strain. It is a question of the application of Christian truth to earthly conditions and human problems. Every sort of perplexity and difficulty with which the church would have to contend was dealt with in that early age of the church. Under apostolic supervision and instruction, every principle needed to simplify and harmonize human relationships was elucidated and applied.

3. They recorded revealed truth that would be needed by the church thereafter. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, who bore the message beyond Jewish bounds, wrote at least thirteen of the New Testament books. John and Peter produced seven more, and Matthew one. The others are from those who were personally associated with the apostles. It thus appears that our sacred Christian writings are practically all attributable, directly or indirectly, to the ministry of the apostles.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Review the names of the twelve, arranging them in groups of three, for convenience in memorizing.

Simon Peter ..... Andrew ..... James.
John ..... Philip ..... Bartholomew.
Thomas ..... Matthew ..... James the Less.
Thaddæus ..... Simon ..... Judas.

2. Indicate, from passages referred to in the preceding lesson, two Scriptures showing that the apostles were chosen to be witnesses of what Jesus did.

3. If one came to us claiming to be an apostle of Christ, how might his claims be disproved?

4. Describe the baptism of the Holy Spirit, showing who received it, who administered it and what the results were.

5. Paul was an apostle chosen as one "untimely born;" if an apostle had to bear testimony, how could Paul do this? He did not journey with the twelve from the baptism of John.

LESSON XXVIII. THE MINISTRY OF ELDERS

No subject of this series is of greater importance than the one before us in this lesson. The elders of a properly organized congregation of Christians have to do with its most vital concerns. They are the appointed guardians and custodians of that without which there would be no church and no gospel—the truth revealed by Jesus Christ. The relative values here indicated may be illustrated as follows:

That which is of greatest value is guarded with greatest care. A man leaves his fuel supply or haystack in the open, but he keeps his watch and purse behind bolted doors and under his pillow.

The value of a thing may depend more upon the relation it sustains than upon itself. A key is but a small piece of metal and a bottle but a bit of glass; neither is worth more than a few cents. Yet, the key may guard priceless treasure or the bottle contain precious fluids. Injury to either may entail great loss.

The truth revealed by our Lord is of utmost importance to the church—it is her own life current: "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life," said Jesus. They are her message, without which the church need not exist. It was to preach "whatsoever I have commanded you" that Jesus sent his apostles into the world, and it was to guard the interests of this message that elders were appointed in all the churches.

On the other hand, the church, we are told (1 Tim. 3: 15), is the "pillar and stay of the truth." So we see plainly that the truth and the church must stand or fall together. Every true disciple should quickly resent any attack on either—on one as quickly as on the other. It is wrong to assume that "the truth will take care of itself." From the very first, those who had it in charge guarded it jealously. Paul cautioned Timothy concerning the things heard of him, that they be committed to "faithful men who should be able to teach others also."

The apostles were the recipients and first guardians of the New Testament revelation. Under their direction the message was committed to evangelists whose duty it was to proclaim it as widely as possible. These evangelists established congregations and strengthened those already established. They were specifically commanded to provide for the care and dissemination of the truth in every congregation (Tit. 1: 5; 2 Tim. 2: 2).

This work of ministering to the churches in spiritual things is the most important service to be rendered in a congregation. It is not strange, then, that the eldership to whom it is entrusted is to be made up of the best and best qualified men in the body. Concerning this office, let us note:

I. The Scriptural Designations of This Office.

1. *Elders* (Acts 14: 23; 1 Pet. 5: 1). The Greek word here used is *presbuteros*, meaning an older person. Age itself is not a qualification, but those suited to the office would, almost invariably, be older men. The idea of direction by "elders" is seen in the Jewish religion. It is reproduced in the church, not because it was Jewish, but rather it was Jewish because it was wise. Of the elder, Thomas Munnell says: "As one of the older brethren, he is expected to possess prudence, patience and vigilance, as also vigor, decision of character and executiveness."

2. *Bishops* (Acts 20: 28; Philem. 1; 1 Tim. 3: 1). The word rendered bishop is *episcopos*, which means overseer. Originally, it applied to the commissioner of a Greek military district. It came, in time, to signify any one who has oversight. This name, as applied to the New Testament elder, marked him as one of those chosen and set apart by his brethren to have care and direction in the church.

3. *Shepherds* (1 Pet. 5: 1-4). This term represents the eldership as having a care over the congregation, similar to that of shepherds over their flocks, Jesus being the chief or over shepherd of them all. To him they are to give account of each member of the flock committed to their care and protection. To the members of the congregation they are to be as a shepherd to his sheep.

II. Scriptural Qualifications of Elders. On this subject two passages speak in detail. The qualities here enumerated may be indicated and defined as follows:

1 Tim. 3 : 1-7.	Tit. 1 : 5-9.
1. Without reproach.	Blameless.
2. The husband of one wife.	The husband of one wife.
3. Temperate.	Self-controlled.
4. Sober-minded.	Sober-minded.
5. Orderly.	
6. Given to hospitality.	Given to hospitality.
7. Apt to teach.	Holding to the faithful word.
8. No brawler.	No brawler.
9. No striker.	No striker.
10. Gentle.	
11. Not contentious.	Not self-willed.
12. No lover of money.	Not greedy of filthy lucre.
13. One that ruleth well his own house.	
14. Not a novice.	
15. Good testimony from them that are without.	

[The instructions to Timothy do not indicate qualifications corresponding exactly to Nos. 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, but the significance of these is contained in those that are given.]

16. Having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly.
17. Not soon angry.
18. Lover of good.
19. Just.
20. Holy.

1. *Without reproach.* The Greek word (*anegkletos*) here used does not mean perfect, but free from any charge of immorality or false teaching.

2. *The husband of one wife.* This could mean (1) a married man, or (2) one not married to a second wife, though the former were dead, or (3) a man not having two living wives; *i. e.*, not a polygamist. The last of these is believed to be what Paul meant, for polygamy was common when he wrote.

3. *Temperate.* The word (*egkrates*) is used only three times in the New Testament; it means abstinent, especially with regard to wine.

4. *Sober-minded.* A reasonable, prudent man, guided by discretion.

5. *Orderly.* Modesty and good manners are indicated by the term used. Not brusque, gruff or boorish.

6. *Given to hospitality.* A spirit often commended in the Scriptures and a grace becoming to all followers of Christ.

7. *Apt to teach.* Qualified to impart knowledge of Christian truth to others.

8. *No brawler.* Literally, "not disposed to fight," as are those given to drinking wine.

9. *No striker.* The former defect emphasized by use of a stronger word, meaning not ready to resent every imposition offered.

10. *Gentle.* Mild and kindly in demeanor.

11. *Not contentious.* Paul's word "longsuffering" expresses the quality here negatively indicated.

12. *No lover of money.* Not avaricious, seeking worldly gain for itself as an aim in life. No evil is more common among Christians and none more hurtful.

13. *One that ruleth well his own house.* This is not a requirement that an elder be a man of family, but that, if he is, he should have shown himself able to rule well in his position as its head, and that, in any case, he should be possessed of the ability to rule with becoming dignity.

14. *Not a novice.* One not yet tried in his new relationships. The word used indicates one, or a plant, newly planted, and not yet securely rooted.

15. *Having good testimony from them that are without.* As the bearer of the gospel to others, he must show its effects in his own life, else they that are without will have no confidence in the religion he represents.

16. *Having children that believe.* This would be a sure indication that one's religious profession was genuine, and that he was able to rule and instruct others.

17. *Not soon angry.* This is covered in 8 and 9, save that hasty outbursts of passion are here forbidden.

18. *A lover of good.* Commonplace as this precept is, it is one of

the most important. Psalm 15 should be read to learn how the same virtue was commended a thousand years earlier.

19. *Just.* Upright in his dealings.

20. *Holy.* Devout, faithful in his duties to God.

III. The Scriptural Relation of Elders.

1. *Elders are to "feed the church of the Lord"* (Acts 20: 28). This would mean to provide wholesome teaching.

2. *They are to protect the flock* (Acts 20: 29-31). To keep safe from corrupting influences, either in faith or morals.

3. *They are to administer discipline when required* (1 Tim. 5: 17). As the shepherd prevents sheep from straying away.

4. *They are to have oversight* (Jas. 5: 14). The important item of this passage seems to be that since, as leaders of the church locally, the elders would be those to whom the spiritual gifts then common had been imparted, they should be called upon in cases of sickness. It is most appropriate, however, for the elders of our own day to visit the sick, pray for them and provide such remedies as may be needed.

5. They should administer the ordinances. The modern practice of expecting that only the minister attend to these things looks toward priestcraft, or, at least, toward a professional clergy—a thing New Testament churches can not too carefully avoid. Both the table of the Lord and Christian baptism may, and should, be attended to by the overseers of the congregation.

6. Elders should be held in high honor and esteem by the congregation (Heb. 13: 7, 17). It is needless to add that elders who merit the name they bear will be so honored.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Does our modern eldership measure up to the Scriptural requirements, even approximately?

2. What gains are there from having a truly Scriptural eldership?

3. Is it evident that Jesus or the apostles meant that there should ever be a professional ministry, or anything that corresponds to the modern "pastor"?

4. How far does the Reformation need reforming along these lines?

5. What losses do our churches sustain from lack of careful oversight and discipline by competent elders?

6. What should be done by a church that does not have men qualified to be elders? What would a Masonic lodge do if it lacked men to lead and instruct in the principles and work of the order?

LESSON XXIX. THE MINISTRY OF DEACONS

The practical we have always with us. The spirit may be of greater value than the body, but as long as it remains in this earthly state it must have the body. The movement may be the important part of the watch, but the case is essential to its preservation and usefulness. The perfume may be very costly, but without the cheap bottle that contains it the fragrance would soon be lost. Thus it will be seen that the practical, visible things of this world are vital, after all.

In the church of our Lord spiritual truth is the supreme possession. God has revealed his mind to man. The Creator of heaven and earth has appeared among us. To those who received him, he gave the right to become sons of God. This truth is the sacred treasure we hold and its declaration is our supreme duty. But material means must be used. The procuring of these and the direction of the temporalities of the church is a service second only to the direction of Christian teaching. For this work men were set apart by their brethren of the first Christian church. In time these came to be called deacons (Phil. 1: 1). Concerning this office we will study the appointment, qualifications and work that pertain to it.

I. The Appointment of Deacons. (Read Acts 6: 1-6.)

1. *There was a need.* It is folly to appoint committees or to select officers unless there is a distinct need for them. The work calls for the man. The necessity makes the office. There was need that some one should "serve tables," and the deacons were chosen. A deacon is the servant of the church.

2. *Choice was made by the church.* It is important that only such men as are acceptable to the church be placed to serve their brethren. The arbitrary appointment of church servants is never warranted. Even the apostles would not attempt it, but required the brethren to look out from among them suitable persons.

3. *The apostles directed the matter.* The apostles were divinely guided in their teachings and directions of the church, and the apostolic approval is a sufficient warrant for the appointment of deacons in any church that has need of direction and service in temporal things.

II. The Qualifications of a Deacon. (Read 1 Tim. 3: 8-13.)

1. *Qualifications enumerated.* (1) "Grave," (2) "not double-tongued," (3) "not given to much wine," (4) "not greedy of filthy lucre," (5) "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," (6) "and let these also first be proved," (7) "husbands of one wife," (8) "ruling their children and their own houses well." It will be seen at a glance that Christian character is the first essential.

2. *Qualifications summed up.* The deacons must be: (1) Men whose general reputation will bring credit to the church. (2) Men who are spiritual rather than carnal. It is not fitting that those who live for physical pleasures chiefly should be public ministers of Christ, even in material things. Note that carnal, as here used, refers to the outer, or fleshly man, while spiritual indicates the inner, or mental, life. (3) Men of sound judgment. This may be determined by the ability shown in the conduct of their own business affairs and the control of their families.

III. The Work of Deacons.

1. *To attend to property interests of the congregation.* At the first there was no need of such a service, since no property interests were involved, neither will there be in many a newly formed congregation to-day. With the building of houses for worship and work comes the necessity for a ministry and direction that must have the personal attention of men competent in such matters. To neglect this part of the Lord's work, or carelessness in attending to it, shows an inexcusable laxness in congregational management that can not but hinder

the Lord's work. It is important, for the esteem in which a church is held among business men will be largely determined by the diligence shown in temporal affairs.

2. *To direct the material ministries of the congregation.* It is the duty of every Christian, as a part of his individual service to the Master, to visit the sick and to lend aid to those in need or distress, but, as will often happen, there will be occasions when the assistance of the whole body must be extended in a particular case. For example, it may be necessary to give assistance to a widow, to support some aged brother or sister, to render aid in establishing the cause in a new field, or to furnish watchers in a home where severe illness or death has come; all such is the legitimate work of the deacons.

3. *To look after local financial matters.* A careful estimate of annual expenses should be made before the beginning of each year, and plans be laid and presented to the congregation by which the necessary funds will be provided. No shabby or superficial work can be done on the local financial problem without great injury to the cause. A deaconate that is competent and worthy will not neglect such or leave them to the eldership or to the one who ministers in the Word. All this is their own special work and is most important. No church can prosper and neglect these things.

In the early church women as well as men were made members of the deaconate (Rom. 16: 1). (The Revised Version renders "servant" "deacon" in the margin.) They were considered as peculiarly adapted to such duties as the care of the sick and needy, especially when women and children were in need of tender ministries (Rom. 16: 1; 1 Tim. 5: 9-15). They would also be better able, in some cases, to encourage the weak and to win back the wayward than are those of the opposite sex. That they were appointed to such services in the early church may account for Paul's remark, "Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderous, temperate, faithful in all things," when giving the qualifications a deacon should possess.

Proficiency in the work of the deaconate is proof of loyalty and efficiency as disciples of the Lord. It is a responsibility to be assumed with seriousness and discharged with diligence. The apostle says (1 Tim. 3: 13): "They who have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." It would appear from this passage that the faithful deacon was regarded as a proper person to be trusted with other and even more important service for the Lord.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Regarding the deacons of a church as servants appointed to attend to material things make a list of the duties that might be regarded as belonging to that office.

2. Should deacons have meetings apart from the elders of a congregation to plan their work?

3. Is there need that deaconesses (female servants of the congregation) be appointed to-day?

4. Should a deacon be satisfied to be less upright in life than an elder is required to be?

5. How much authority do the deacons of a congregation have? How much honor is due him?

6. Is choice to a place in the deaconate an honor or a responsibility or both?

LESSON XXX. THE MINISTRY OF DISCIPLES

The title most frequently used by the followers of our Lord when addressing him was "Master." The Greek word is more properly rendered "Teacher," as in the American Standard Revised New Testament. The character thus designated was fully exemplified in his daily conduct. He was, above all else, a teacher.

The word most frequently used to designate the followers of Jesus, both by himself and by others referring to them, is "disciple." The term meant a pupil or learner. It was in common use, and could have had but one meaning to people of that time. It was never used *as a name*, but always as a simple, well-known word to designate relationship sustained to the great Teacher. This usage came about naturally, as Jesus lived among the Jews, where each noted rabbi had his school of disciples.

Various other names, such as "brethren," "saints" and "children of God," were occasionally applied to followers of the Lord. Each had its significance, expressing a particular relationship assumed by those who companied with him. To illustrate: As related to Christ, they were disciples or learners; as related to God, they were children by adoption; as related to each other, they were brethren; and as related to the world, they were saints, or separated ones.

Of all these relationships, the one most vital is that of discipleship to Jesus Christ. The others exist because of it. Presently the gospel message took permanent form, and was proclaimed to others than Jews. Then it came to pass that these names were merged into a new one, and the "disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26). But, while the more inclusive term has gained general acceptance, the others still serve a purpose in Christian terminology, and among them "disciple" still holds precedence, because it relates to the Saviour.

It has been the one aim of this movement to restore lost meanings and lost values to religious doctrine and life. A study of the New Testament disciple is much needed. It has been said that we have succeeded better in restoring doctrine than life; evident as this may appear, it is contradictory, for doctrine produces life; defective life is a sure indication of defective doctrine. If we can get clear grasp of the "doctrine of discipleship," we will have risen to higher ground.

I. The Disciple is to Learn the Teachings of His Master.

The most commonly quoted invitation of our Lord is, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is a call to discipleship, and it is followed by explicit direction: "Take my yoke upon you;" *i. e.*, do things as I do; "learn of me;" get my plan of life (which was to accord worship or worthship to a heavenly Father), "and ye shall find rest to your souls" (Matt. 11: 28, 29).

1. *Jesus was eager to teach.*

(1) He assembled his disciples at every opportunity and bent all his energies to the work of teaching. His discourses, so called, and interviews were really class meetings, where the questionings of men's hearts were drawn out and where the Master imparted the principles of his own life.

(2) He sought only the teachable, and of them he required that the truth he held should be sought and valued above all else. Read Luke 9: 57-62 as proof of this. Here he seems rather to repel than to invite a following.

2. *The disciples and others were eager to hear and understand his teachings and the principles of his proposed reign.*

(1) They sometimes asked for teaching on specific topics (Matt. 24: 3; Luke 11: 1; Acts 1: 6).

(2) They asked for further instruction on topics he had treated figuratively and for explanation of difficulties (Matt. 13: 10; 13: 36; 17: 19).

(3) Persons in the crowd asked him for aid in their perplexities (Matt. 19: 16; Mark 12: 28; Luke 12: 13, 14).

(4) Strangers from afar came to hear his teachings (Matt. 4: 25; John 12: 20).

3. *The teachings of Jesus have been carefully preserved.* (See Luke 1: 1-4; Heb. 2: 3, 4.) Properly studied, these teachings will awaken the old interest among disciples; they will help to an understanding and a right solution of all human problems, and will turn the current of life into right channels.

Nor have they lost any of their interest for men of the world. The "church" may have, in some measure, lost its hold on the masses; but, also, the church may have drifted somewhat from her original message. If so, this might account for modern disinterestedness. It is worth while to consider whether or not this is true.

II. The Disciple is to Exemplify the Teachings of the Master.

This feature of discipleship must be stressed; first, because of its primal importance, and, secondly, because it is here that we have failed most markedly. That the gospel must be lived as well as believed, has become a platitude. What we must realize is that *the gospel is not believed in any true sense, only as it is lived.*

Action must have central place in the whole realm of things, moral and ethical.

1. *Doing is made the condition of*

(1) Entrance to the new kingdom (Matt. 7: 21).

(2) Sustaining the divine relationship (Matt. 12: 50).

(3) Nearness to Jesus (Luke 11: 27, 28).

(4) Remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 38).

2. *Doing is the process prescribed by Jesus, whereby the faith of disciples is to be strengthened* (John 7: 17).

3. *Doing is that which distinguishes living, saving faith from dead and profitless profession.* (Read Jas. 1: 22-25; 2: 14-18.)

4. *Modern psychologists reach the conclusion that action is of central importance in character-building.* Witness the following passages from specialists:

"The idea, the knowledge content, grows out of, as well as leads up to, action."—*Dewey.*

"If no external action follows the internal, how can I be certain that I have willed?"—*Hoofding.*

"The effects of actions extend more or less widely beyond the original motives of volition, so that new motives are originated for future actions, and again in their turn produce new effects."—*Wundt.*

"If you are to train the powers of perception, you must train the conduct of the person who is to learn how to perceive. Nobody sees more than his activities have prepared him to see in the world."—*Royce.*

"Axioms are not axioms until they have been done by our muscles. The student must repeatedly express his thought thoroughly to understand it and retain it. . . . A principle applied is a very different thing from a principle held in the abstract. . . . The expression, the application naturally gives what we call the realizing sense."—*Henry Churchill King.*

In the light of all the foregoing, read again these simple but stupendous words of Jesus, placing emphasis on "doeth" and "doeth them not," and remembering that they stand in our record just at the close of what we term "The Sermon on the Mount," in which his teachings are set forth:

"Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock.

"And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon the house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof" (Matt. 7: 24-27).

Consider also this from the great apostle:

"Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6: 16).

Christianity has scarcely been given a fair trial. The strength of nations is measured by the number of "Dreadnaughts" they can display; welfare of races is controlled by commercial brigands; society is torn by numberless contentions of man with his fellow-man; even in the church, disciples dare hate each other and cherish the unforgiving spirit, regardless of our Lord's positive teachings to the contrary. These are a few of our hindrances.

So far as Christianity has been tried, it has done wonders. In here and there a factory or business house, in many hundreds of homes and many thousands of lives, the leaven of the Master is at work. It is gaining ground too. It will take the world. Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. He will yet be King of all kings.

III. The Disciple is to Bring Others to the School of Christ.

In this one sentence is wrapped up all the privilege and obligation of the missionary enterprise. It is not clear that Jesus ever meant

that his church should have elegant structures, and elaborate organization, or a professional ministry; the contrary seems to be clearly implied. His program was simple, and his plan seems to have been that it be carried out by disciples moved by personal loyalty to him.

1. *His first disciples instinctively sought out their friends to tell them of him.*

(1) Andrew sought Simon Peter (John 1: 40-42).

(2) Philip sought Nathanael (John 1: 44-46).

(3) The Samaritan woman sought her acquaintances (John 4: 28, 29).

(4) The disciples at Jerusalem, being persecuted, went out preaching (Acts 8: 4-8).

The "great commission" of our Lord was a permit more than a command. Such was the enthusiasm of the first disciples that they were eager to go with the evangel. It is an incongruity of our religion that, to-day, we must have it laid upon us as an obligation. Men seek out their neighbors to tell them of a new remedy for some common ill, an interesting book or an opportunity for investment. Jesus Christ and his gospel—the "pearl of great price," the "one altogether lovely," the "great physician"—these alone suffer for lack of the voluntary advocacy of their friends.

2. *When banded together in congregations, the instinct to "go or send" asserted itself* (Acts 13: 1-3).

3. *Christians, independent of each other in all else, joined in the support of those who had been sent* (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2; Phil. 4: 15, 16; 2 Cor. 9: 1, 2).

4. *The gospel plan accords with human reason in this,* that by no other means than the ministry of man to his fellow can the gospel power be applied to its work of saving the world (Rom. 10: 11-15). The whole duty of disciples may be summed up in this brief word:

(1) To learn the gospel,

(2) To live the gospel, and

(3) To bear the gospel to others.

This program will save the man who carries it out, and the world in which it is carried out, for the life that now is and for that which is to come, or there is no salvation and "we are, of all men, most miserable."

Subjects for Discussion

1. Give five names applied to followers of Christ in the New Testament, and show the significance of each.

2. Why are the disciples of our Lord divided into groups and called by different names to-day?

3. Did Jesus Christ or the apostles name the church?

4. Tell some of the ways in which the doctrine of Jesus can be learned in our day. What is the best way?

5. Give the simple program outlined by Christ and his apostles for disciples.

6. How can the gospel of Christ be made so popular that it will spread of itself?

PART VII.

FIVE LESSONS ON METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION

Lesson XXXI. The Ministry of the Word.
Lesson XXXII. Shepherding the Flock.
Lesson XXXIII. How to Deal with the Erring.
Lesson XXXIV. The Administration of the Ordinances.
Lesson XXXV. Financing the Enterprise.

LESSON XXXI. THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

To impart truth—there is no higher service. The Son of God sent to be our Saviour appeared among us as a teacher. His service to the race was wrapped up in a message, which he designated variously as "these sayings of mine," "the gospel"—good tidings—and "the gospel of the kingdom."

This message he represented to be "the words of God" (John 3: 34), the channel of "spirit and life" (John 6: 63), and as received directly from "the Father" (John 12: 49, 50).

His hearers were readily convinced that the claims he made were true. Congregations "wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke 4: 22). Officers sent to arrest him were won by the discourse they heard (John 7: 45-47). Peter, after patient consideration, said to him, "Thou hast words of eternal life" (John 6: 68).

This message of the great Master was entrusted to the twelve (John 17: 6-8), and by them "confirmed," God bearing witness by signs and wonders and gifts of the Spirit (Heb. 2: 2-4). The apostles instructed evangelists and ordained teachers in the churches, taking care that the "message" be borne on by worthy agents (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2). So that, as seen in another lesson of this series, every provision has been made that this "message" be proclaimed to all mankind. The church, as equipped by the apostles, was in real fact "the pillar and stay of the truth," and she should be in this day as well.

It will appear, then, that the preaching of the Word is of utmost importance. It will be convenient to consider here the call to preach, the service to be rendered and the response that is due.

I. The Call—Who May Preach?

1. *Any disciple who is able to do so acceptably may preach the gospel.* The church-members driven out of Jerusalem asked no odds, and waited for no instructions, but went everywhere preaching the Word. Philip had no commission that we know of, but he stirred the

city of Samaria. A "certain disciple" at Damascus led Saul to obedience, and a Jewish Christian tent-maker taught Apollos the way of the Lord more perfectly. These things took place in the formative period of the church's life; later, letters of commendation were sometimes borne or sent to introduce a teacher (Acts 15: 22-29; 1 Cor. 16: 10, 11), and this, for the sake of good order, should be done to-day. Every man who goes out to preach ought to have somewhere a reputable and intelligent congregation willing to vouch for his integrity and ability. This much his brethren may require of him. No congregation should receive a teacher who is unable, or unwilling, to present such credentials. Where "tramp preachers" are countenanced the cause will surely suffer sooner or later.

2. *The elders are to be teachers in a special sense.* Not every one chosen to be an elder will be gifted as a public teacher, but all should seek to qualify as far as is possible. There will usually be one or more brethren in a congregation able to teach to edification, and if otherwise qualified these will naturally come to places of influence and leadership. The elders of a congregation are guardians of the message, and, even though not themselves public teachers, there is nothing to hinder any man of ordinary intelligence from so understanding the gospel as to guard the flock from false teachers and dangerous doctrines. The quick placing of men so qualified in places of leadership is all that will save the Restoration movement from great loss in the coming generation.

3. *There must be men specially qualified as teachers.* It has come about that every important work requires specialists. There is no reason why this, the most important of all, should not have its just due. There must be care, however, that these teachers occupy such places as will not in any way disturb the New Testament order. A teacher so qualified and called to serve constantly in a given congregation or community is not the "pastor," nor even a pastor, unless duly chosen to the eldership of the congregation, and if he presumes to displace or supplant the bishops of the church, he oversteps all bounds and becomes an interloper. On the contrary, it should be his aim to seek out, instruct and otherwise qualify the best men in the community to be leaders of the congregation and guardians of the "message." The plan too often followed now, by which the minister—servant—of a congregation becomes its promoter, manipulator or overlord, is a travesty on the New Testament, to be classed along with other perversions.

4. *Such a teacher, if desired, should be chosen with due caution.*

(1) The elders should direct the matter.

(2) The needs of the congregation and community should be thoroughly canvassed and considered.

(3) From those known to be available, only such as are thought to be suited to the particular need should be mentioned even by the elders.

(4) Having settled on the best available man, he should be thoroughly investigated as to character and former work, before the subject is mentioned to him. No congregation should proceed to secure a minister without due consideration for the field in which he is en-

gaged. There is no gain to the cause when one congregation advances at the expense of another.

(5) Satisfied as to his fitness, and assured of his willingness to consider the work, a call may be given.*

(6) Wise bishops will avoid two dangerous courses often followed: (*a*) The consideration of more than one minister at a time, and (*b*) acting in these matters without the practically unanimous support of the congregation.

II. The Service—What May be Expected of the Preacher?

1. *That he be a good man.* A man of good character may have a faulty message, but no message, however nearly correct, can be effective if it is not backed up by a life consistent with its content.

2. *That he have a positive Christian message.*

(1) Christian in that it accords perfectly with the spirit and teaching of our Lord and his apostles. A discourse labeled "Christ and Him Crucified" may indeed crucify Christ afresh, by its misrepresentations of his spirit, while another bearing no label at all, and making little reference to Christ, may be wholly Christian in tenor and teaching; so the whole message of a man. The preacher who does not preach Christ has no business preaching in a Christian pulpit.

(2) But it should be *positively* Christian. Faith—virile, living, fighting faith—is what the race needs. If the preacher has doubts, he will confer a favor by keeping them. His hearers care not for what he does not know, and will be disheartened the moment he starts out to tell it—the story is too long.

(3) And his message must be definite. Every New Testament preacher had a mark, and every New Testament sermon went straight at that mark. The workers of that time "turned the world upside down" because of their determined concentration on one thing—the saving of men from sin by a simple message from God. The same thing done in the same way will get the same result now. We need more rifle-balls and fewer shotgun sermons.

III. The Response—What May the Gospel Preacher Expect of His Hearers?

1. *That they "behave themselves as becometh saints,"* thus "adorning the doctrine" and accelerating his message (Tit. 2: 9, 10; 2 Cor. 3: 2, 3).

2. *That they show due regard for him who "labors in word and doctrine;"* not clerical distinction, but such esteem as will clothe his message with power. Others than he should fire the furnace, pass the song-books and collect moneys needed for the work. Many a man has been driven from an otherwise hopeful field, if not from the ministry of the Word, by being made to feel that his was the position of a menial, to whom every nagging detail of the work should be assigned.

3. *That they give him adequate support in material things.* relieving him of the burdens of earning a livelihood for his family, in proportion as he gives his time to the work (1 Cor. 9: 6-11; Gal. 6: 6).

4. *That they supplement his verbal message* with practical Chris-

*The matter of a "trial sermon" must be settled agreeably to all. If the congregation does not desire it, or the minister dislikes such a procedure, it may be safely dispensed with. No rule is applicable to all cases.

tian ministry to the sick and unfortunate, and by teaching in private and from house to house, inviting others to accept Christ.

These are but a few suggestions. The spontaneous ministrations that spring from hearts made alive and sympathetic by the Divine Spirit, through the Word, are many and varied. After all is said, the gospel ministry in any community is a mutual matter. A good congregation will draw the best from him who serves in spiritual things, and the capable, consecrated minister of the Word will build a good congregation and be duly honored. They are but earthen vessels in which the truth is borne to a needy world.

Subjects for Discussion

1. What is meant by Paul's statement that the church is "the pillar and support of the truth"?
2. Are the bishops of a congregation justified in seeking out one specially qualified to minister "in word and doctrine"?
3. When one is called to minister in the teaching service, what should be his relation to the elders, and what should he be called—evangelist, pastor, preacher, rector or minister?
4. How far can the elders of our own day be looked to for teaching?
5. What is it to "preach Christ and him crucified"?
6. What is a "proper support" of one who gives his entire time to the ministry of the Word?

LESSON XXXII. SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK

In all the imagery of the Bible—and it is a book of beautiful pictures—there is no symbol more fit than that which represents the Christian congregation under care of faithful elders by the figure of a flock and its shepherds. This is an illustration that will be readily understood by all who know the nature of sheep and the care they require; and in countries where sheep-raising is not common, song and story have familiarized the people with their habits and history.

Former lessons have given us a general view of the office, character and duty of elders. Here we will consider specific obligations and responsibilities that have fallen into disuse among the elders of our own time, and suggest some methods by which this work can be accomplished with thoroughness and good order.

I. The Work to be Done.

It will help us at the beginning to reread the matchless passage from one who, being himself an elder and an apostle, also spoke of the subject with great feeling: "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to *the will of* God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5: 2-4).

The admonition of Peter to "tend the flock of God which is among you," may be more readily understood if we follow the illustration and consider the duties of the shepherd who tends his flock with diligence.

1. *The flock must have food.* This is a constant need, and must never be neglected for any long period, else the flock will suffer.

This duty is elsewhere emphasized. (See Acts 20: 28.) Here it is plain that Christian teaching is meant. This, indeed, was the chief care of the eldership from the beginning. If all elders were not themselves teachers, or if, as seems likely from certain passages, others than elders were received as teachers, the whole matter was carried on under their direction. This would require that elders be thoroughly competent to judge of the qualifications of teachers and the correctness of teaching. It appears, then, that elders are the appointed and rightful superintendents of the teaching service of the church. What shall and shall not be taught is made to depend upon them. The elder who takes no care to know what ought to be taught, or exercises no vigilance to ascertain what is being taught, has abdicated as to the chief trust that inheres in his position.

The food most needed—indispensable, in fact—is clearly shown by the figures used in referring to it. In 1 Pet. 2: 2 we have it "the sincere milk of the word," or, following the American Revision, "spiritual milk," with a marginal note which adds, "belonging to the reason." In 1 Cor. 3: 1, 2 mention is made of both "milk" and "meat," to illustrate different kinds of spiritual food needed. Again, in Heb. 5: 12-14, "milk" is contrasted with "solid food," and the use of each designated.

2. *The flock must have shelter from storm.* A significant Scripture is that spoken by the author of the Hebrew letter (Heb. 13: 17). This is an exhortation to Christians, but incidentally it throws light on the relation of the shepherd to the flock. "They watch in behalf of your souls, as they that must give account." This is made more clear by the reference in 1 Pet. 5: 4, to the "chief Shepherd," who shall appear to reward all faithful undershepherds for their care of his sheep.

Though highly figurative, this language is but the better calculated to indicate the responsibility of elders for those under their care. There are a thousand contrary winds of trial, and there are dangers at every turn, particularly for the young and untrained disciples. Elders are to be on guard and offer every possible protection from the temptations, entanglements and allurements of the world.

3. *The flock must be protected from enemies.* The most common and most deadly of these are false teachers. There is no greater fallacy than the plea sometimes made that religious teachers have a right to free speech, and may therefore inculcate such doctrines and advance such opinions as may please them. Not the "pastor"—in modern sense—nor the evangelist is to judge of this matter, but the elders, or shepherds, of the flock. True, the elders are sometimes disqualified by ignorance or prejudice, and in such case the flock is defenseless. In some cases elders, from a supposed sense of modesty or a consciousness of inability, permit the most dangerous and hurtful doctrines to be proclaimed under the auspices of the congregation. The eldership *must protect the flock*, or it will have no protection, and

the elder must *qualify* to do it, for he is responsible to the Lord that it be done. Qualification means more than merely to know truth from falsehood; infinite tact, patience and courage will be required.

II. The Way to Proceed.

1. *The Manner.* Of utmost importance is the spirit shown by elders. Even as the shepherd must know his sheep, and so minister to them that they will know his voice among others and come at his call, so must the competent elder lead and direct. Here, as everywhere in the church, service is the condition of advancement. The apostle said nothing as to method, but he was specific as to manner (1 Pet. 5: 1-4). Here we see that the elder's service is to be

(1) "Not of constraint." Those appointed to this work should not regard it as an undesirable task, and require to be persuaded, or undertake their duties in a manner indicating no interest or enthusiasm.

(2) "Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." This would lead us to believe that those having oversight, some of them at least, were paid for their services, but it disqualifies and bars from the service all who take oversight *with this as the actuating motive.*

(3) "Neither as lording it over the charge committed to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock"—examples in service. Those great in service are to be leaders, and they had to *hold precedence,* not by the power of authority, but by the example of humility in service.

2. *The Method.* The work of the eldership is plainly indicated in the Scriptures, and the manner in which it is to be done is made emphatic. But no method is prescribed. Here, as elsewhere in the gospel enterprise, human ingenuity is to be exercised and the best way discovered. The wisdom of this will appear when we reflect that one method could not serve in every case; a church in Kentucky may thrive under a pastoral plan that would mean disaster if applied to a Chinese congregation.

The best that can be done here, then, is to loosely outline a program for the shepherding of the flock.

(1) As to "feeding the flock." If there is an elder qualified to conduct the ministry of the Word, and his services are acceptable to the congregation, he should be so occupied; if more than one, some equitable and acceptable division of this work should be made. If there be none such, then the elders may, and should, call to their aid an evangelist (the word is here used in a New Testament and not in a modern sense), to whose hands this important work may be committed. Certainly for incompetent men to insist on conducting the teaching service on the pretext that they are "the elders" is unwarranted; there is no surer way to bring the cause into reproach or to impede its progress. There was need in the early church for men of shining talents to stay months and years in one place preaching the Word; men, too, who were not elders. Such an one is, strictly speaking, the evangelist, and not "the pastor," or even "the minister," of a congregation. In no case should the elders relinquish a careful guardianship of the teaching service of the church. Such, we understand, is the plan followed by many Australian churches of Christ as well as many in the United States.

(2) As to "sheltering the sheep." The guardian care by the elders of those who are endeavoring to live the spiritual life in a world of sin is of utmost importance—next to the teaching of the Word, in fact. It is, to speak in a figure, the cultivation of tender plants that have sprung up from seeds of truth. This part of the work of the eldership, along with the teaching function, has been permitted to go by in default, and for this reason the church is often but a disorganized band of weaklings, half of whom can not be found, or, when found, will not admit being members; the others holding together in a half-hearted way around a nucleus of timid leaders—a shepherdless flock it is in fact.

The total membership of the congregation should be canvassed and apportioned among the elders, each one becoming responsible for the care of a reasonable number. This division may be made: (*a*) Geographically, for convenience in visiting; (*b*) temperamentally, each elder being assigned those he can best serve, or (*c*) by nationality—an American congregation might include several tongues or nationalities, making separate pastoral oversight for each a necessity.

(3) As to guarding from "grievous wolves." The context here shows that these were false teachers. It is the duty of elders to protect the flock and, so far as the message of their congregation is concerned, the whole community from false teaching of all types. This duty will often require great tact and courage as well as thorough equipment. A man of winning personality may, by special influence, get a hearing and gain a hold in the congregation before it is discovered that he bears an unsafe message or has an unsavory reputation. To thwart the influence of such an one, and to separate from him without hurt to the cause, is no easy problem often. Radical action should be avoided. Protest should be earnest, kindly and well grounded. Above all, the membership should refrain from discussing the matter even among themselves, thus avoiding public scandal, disaffection, division and consequent loss to the cause. Time should be taken, if need be, to avoid rupture, but the elders who have so far ceased to exercise vigilance as to permit an imposition of this kind upon the congregation, are under the most sacred obligations to save the cause from hurt, at any cost to their own comfort or interests. The best way to correct such a mistake is not to make it.

Elders ought to know the doctrine of Christ. There is no excuse for allowing "Adventism," "Christian Science," "Mormonism," "Dawnism," or any other perversion of New Testament teaching, to make incursions on the flock of God—no excuse save the lack of competent shepherds. Any man who can read can so learn the gospel as to vanquish these hurtful fads in a fortnight, when they appear. There is great need that Christians qualify for such work.

Subjects for Discussion

1. Three-minute discussion of the work of elders as shown by the Scripture passages of this lesson.

2. What qualities and qualifications of a good elder are natural and what ones may be acquired? (See lesson on "The New Testament Elder.")

3. Debate, "*Resolved*, That the lack of competent elders is our greatest weakness to-day."

4. Debate, "*Resolved*, That the Methodist Episcopal Church government by bishops and presiding elders is more desirable than the congregational, as practiced."

5. How can one be made an elder in a New Testament sense?

6. What should be the attitude of a congregation toward its elders who serve faithfully and acceptably?

LESSON XXXIII. HOW TO DEAL WITH THE ERRING

The body, under direction of the head, looks out for the welfare of its members. An injured foot is favored and protected by the other foot that bears a greater weight, and by the hand that carries a cane or crutch, while through eyes and fingers the brain ministers intelligently to the disabled member and seeks its restoration. The church is the body of Christ. Her members should be cared for as readily and as effectively as are the members of a human organism when directed by intelligence. But are they? Alas! no. And to this neglect may be attributed the appalling losses from the numbers won through preaching the gospel.

"To err is human," has become a proverb. The other part of it—"to forgive is divine"—is much the more important clause. God is ready always to forgive the sinner who repents and obeys the gospel; he is no less ready to forgive those who, having obeyed, sin again. To bring such to penitence is the purpose of correction, instruction and reproof as administered through Christian discipline. It is the whole body caring for the needy member through means provided by Him "who is head over all things to the church."

Hospitals with nurses and equipment are established in cities. Surgeons and ambulances are always attendant upon armies. They are provided on supposition that sick and injured ones will need attention. An accident or an acute or serious illness does not appal a community as it once did, for provision has been made for such things. In the church, however, we busy ourselves with teaching, baptizing and devising, with little, if any, activity in behalf of those who grow careless or succumb to temptation. Yet these things should be expected, foreseen and courageously met. As well leave the lame and blind and the destitute to perish as to fail in our duty to those spiritually out of the way.

Any Christian not only may, but should, be on the alert to render aid to the fallen or tempted ones, but as the work is most vital the duty is laid with special weight upon those who are chosen to have oversight.

The following outline is submitted as an aid to the investigation and study of this subject.

I. The Reason Why.

1. *Jesus taught it by word and deed.*

(1) Three parables were given to show God's solicitude for the straying (Luke 15: 1-32).

(2) His own example in the cases of Zacchæus and the Samaritan woman confirms these teachings (Luke 19: 1-10; John 4: 1-26).

2. *Each Christian is likely to need such care* (Gal. 6: 1, 2).

3. *It is an important service to God and man* (Jas. 5: 19, 20).

4. *As members of one body, each member should be thoughtful for the welfare of others.*

5. *We are qualified for the work.* "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Our very weakness and mistakes fit us for the task.

II. The Method of Procedure.

In this the Lord himself gives explicit direction. (Read carefully Matt. 18: 15-17.) Though given to the apostles before the formation of the church, this plan works equally well whether applied by them, by overseers of a church or by individual disciples. Let us follow it step by step.

1. "*Go show him his fault between him and thee alone:* if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."

But, in case he will not hear,

2. "*Take with thee one or two more, that in the mouths of two witnesses or three every word may be established.*"

Then, "if he refuse to hear them,

3. *Tell it unto the church*" (congregation), *and if he refuse to hear the church also,*

4. "*Let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.*"

Note.—Such a case would naturally be taken to a congregation through its overseers. This would be an orderly procedure. This plan, followed patiently and in right spirit, will avail to settle most disagreements and to correct most irregularities. *It is the divine plan.* Yet, though this is God's plan, it will not always succeed, for God does not override the human will. In spite of all agencies, human and divine, some will go on to destruction. In a case where such seems to be the only outcome, it is the next care of those in charge to protect the church from scandal, thus saving the body itself from injury or loss. For such exigencies there is provided

III. A Last Resort.

For this we go to the writings of Paul. The apostles, of which Paul was a prominent member, were those chosen to carry on to completion that which the Lord himself had only begun (Matt. 28: 16-20; Luke 24: 44-49; Acts 1: 1). For this work they were given special qualification (John 14: 26).

Naturally enough, in the founding and development of the church there would arise conditions requiring special treatment. Such an emergency came in the congregation at Corinth. Paul's first letter (1 Cor. 5: 1-13) refers to the case, and gives explicit instructions concerning it. From the second letter we learn that his directions were followed and the cause saved from reproach. As an instance in which extreme measures were resorted to, this case is worthy of careful study.

1. *The sin committed was infamous and had become a public scandal* (v. 1).

2. *The offender, so far as the record goes, was boldly impenitent.*

3. *The church, by its attitude, had become partaker in the sin* (v. 2).

4. *The only course in such a case was to "deliver such a one unto Satan," since that seems to be his own deliberate choice and determination* (vs. 3-8).

5. *The body will be held responsible for the conduct and condition of its own members, but not for those without* (vs. 9-13).

The action here taken is primarily for the protection of the body, as when a limb is amputated, yet, if there is any hope for a sinner thus depraved, it lies in his being thus seriously delivered to Satan by righteous men and women. The whole proceeding is to be in order that, if possible, "the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (v. 5).

No definite directions are given here as to who shall lead in the administration of discipline, nor are there any details as to how to proceed. But since the elders of a congregation are its proper overseers or shepherds, as guardians of the flock, the duty would fall to them. The steps necessary are not here indicated, but what the Lord had said is familiar to us and must have been to them.

The elders could, of course, call any member to their assistance in any case of discipline, and they must, as a matter of course, call on the whole body to ratify their action, if withdrawal of fellowship is recommended. Here, as in other important proceedings, let there be no idle gossip among members or unwarranted criticism of those in charge. Brethren and sisters should lend needed support to the elders in their work and extend prayerful sympathy to the offending member. Even if an elder or deacon err, open and indiscriminate criticism will not help the case. There is a right way to proceed in such matters.

A precautionary word may be added. All discipline should be so carried out as to correct, if possible, the irregularity that has occasioned it. Personal animus or desire to administer pain or punishment to the erring one must not be countenanced for a moment. On the other hand, the offender, if he be a double-dealing, hypocritical person, may feign penitence again and again, thus playing on the sympathies of his brethren and yet continue his evil course to the great hurt of the cause.

Subjects for Discussion

1. What class of sins should be most carefully guarded against? (See 1 Cor. 5: 11.)

2. Is it the particular sin or the state of the sinner that demands disciplinary measures?

3. Recall some instances where prompt and wise discipline would have saved loss to the cause. These may be related in the class, omitting names, of course.

4. Where work like this is required of men, what character qualifications should be possessed by those who lead? (See 1 Tim. 3: 1-7; Tit. 1: 5-9.)

5. Why do church officers usually shrink from these duties?

6. Read Matt. 13: 24-30, 47-50, and consider whether these parables may be supposed to teach that good and bad are to be let dwell together unmolested *in the church.*

LESSON XXXIV. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ORDINANCES

The strongest argument against immersion and the weekly observance of the Lord's table is the way they are conducted in many congregations. That which should make baptism a beautiful and altogether attractive ordinance has made it repulsive to many, while, by the same process, the brief time of communion with the Lord has been so drawn out and perverted as to make it a tedious test of patience. This course of study would lack completeness if it failed to give attention to this important matter.

The ordinances are important. The movement to restore the New Testament order is distinguished from all other religious reforms in this—it accords to the ordinances the place they occupied in the beginning. It contends that:

1. *They are ordinances of Christ—not of the church.* Therefore, while the church may administer, she may not change them and may not alter the terms, limitations or extensions that have been divinely approved.

2. *They are monumental.* Standing as witnesses before the world, they must not be shorn of their power to testify, as is done when the observance is modified in any essential particular.

3. *They are personal; i. e.*, depending, for their validity and worth, upon the individual participating, and not upon the character or faith of the administrator, or the judgment of fellow-disciples who may have part in the observance.

It is most important, but by no means an easy thing to do, that we ignore prevalent views and ordinary customs, if we would come to estimate the ordinances at their true value, and see the need of proper observance in our own day and in every community, but, bearing in mind the discriminations above made, we may proceed with the subject.

I. Essential Principles that Must be Preserved.

This is of first importance. All else may be sacrificed for it. If baptism is made to appear as a means of getting into the church, and the communion as part of a set program merely, it can not be done. The ordinances of Christ must be more than this, or they will soon be much less.

1. *As to baptism:* It should be impressed upon each candidate that he is obeying the direction of his Saviour (Matt. 28: 19); that he is "being baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3: 26, 27); and that, in doing so, he will "put on Christ," being buried "with him through baptism into death" that he may "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6: 4). This, properly done, will enable each one to approach the ordinance with faith and not with fear; with eagerness and glad anticipation, and not with shrinking and reluctance.

2. *As to the communion:* Disciples must be made to feel the meaning of this observance, or it can not be properly called a communion. In every Christian home, in the Bible school and from the pulpit, regularly and during special evangelistic meetings, it must be set forth constantly that

(1) The Lord's table is to be a communion with Jesus Christ (1

Cor. 10: 16). By recalling the sacrifice of our Lord for us, we are prepared for the outgoing of our hearts to God and the incoming of his Spirit to our hearts.

(2) The Lord's table is a place of self-adjustment (1 Cor. 11: 28, 29). Three expressions here used, if understood, show the meaning of this passage. They are "prove thyself," "judgment" and "discern not the body." The significance of it must be appreciated. To do this each one must examine, or prove, himself as to the spirit in which he comes; failing to do this, the communicant is not justified as a worthy child of God, but judged or condemned as one unworthy.

(3) The Lord's table is to be a testimony to the world (1 Cor. 11: 26)—"As oft," "ye proclaim the Lord's death." Here is the gospel all may preach, the witness all may bear. Two hundred disciples of Jesus in a village, meeting regularly to break bread in memory of the Master, means the conquest of that village for Christ. A larger or smaller number will have a proportionate influence anywhere. In hundreds of churches this testimony is not borne; in all Protestant Christendom it is relegated to a secondary place. For this reason many among us are "weak and sickly," and the cause of the Lord languishes.

(4) The Lord's table is a memorial institution (1 Cor. 11: 23-25). "This do in remembrance of me" are the tenderest words ever spoken. They designate a privilege rather than a duty. We are permitted thus to indicate our appreciation of what Jesus Christ has done for us.

II. Desirable Elements that Should Accompany the Observance.

1. *Simplicity.* In this one word is the soul of all helpful religious activity. There may be a place for pomp and pageant, but it is not in the Christian religion. Anything that looks to formalism, an imposing performance or an impressive ritual, is to be discarded at once, as not in keeping with the spirit of these ordinances. The first baptisms were in a wilderness stream and the first communions in the upper story of a private residence. Departures from the simplicity of the gospel have been accompaniments of decay in religion, always.

2. *Dispatch.* All appearance of haste should be avoided and all movements should be respectfully deliberate, but promptness and dispatch, those indispensable attendants of all successful operation, are nowhere of greater worth. Long speeches, long prayers and all unnecessary preliminaries and extensions must be eliminated. In no other way can the communion be restored to the rightful place as a weekly celebration in Christian congregations. All needed remarks can be made in three minutes or less, and no prayer of thanks need occupy over fifty words. Of course these limitations are not applicable on all occasions, but they are within reason when needful. It is not wise that the communion service be taken out of the hands of the eldership; rather, it should be placed there and kept there, but, where those who preside are hopelessly possessed with the notion that they must make speeches at the table, there is need that something be done to save the ordinance from reproach.

The remarks made here apply as well to baptism, but happily they are not as much needed there.

3. *Edification.* Though simplicity and dispatch have to do with making any religious performance profitable, there is yet much to be

said of the edification to be derived from baptism and the Lord's Supper.

(1) Those who administer should be edified. For this reason the whole burden of public service should not rest on one person, lest he be so "prayed out," as well as "played out," that the administration become a barren form to him.

(2) Those who participate should be edified. The water used for baptizing should be at the same temperature as the air above it. The loaf and wine should be palatable. Dreary talks or extended remarks of any kind are not essential, nor often desirable. The brother in charge may be benefited, or even edified, by the address he delivers, but Paul puts the church above the individual, when he says, "He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself, but he that prophesieth edifieth the church," and he clearly indicates the chief purpose of public ministration when he adds, "Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying" (1 Cor. 14: 4, 5). True, these words refer to speaking publicly in unknown tongues, but is not very much of that which accompanies the ordinances, as often observed, as unintelligible to many present as if delivered in an unknown tongue?

(3) Others than disciples should be edified. Reflect that both baptism and the supper are monumental and educational in their general significance to those without. The regular, punctual and general assembling of disciples for the purpose of keeping the appointments of their Lord can not but have a tremendous influence in any community. The proper and attractive celebration of the central facts of gospel history has for the human mind a fascination realized only in part as yet. The way Protestantism has treated the appointed ordinances of the Lord has done much to discredit his authority among men. Baptism is made a bone of contention or a "mere form," to be treated as the fickle prejudices of men may dictate. The Lord's table is by many regarded as a sort of semi-sacred observance, to be shelved for three, six or twelve months at a time, or else as a fetich with supernatural significance; being neither, it has lost its real significance. Restore its meaning, and it becomes a feast of love.

III. Helpful Methods that May be Used.

Having taken due care to safeguard and preserve what is essential to observance of the ordinances, such manner, means and surroundings as may be most appropriate and helpful may be freely sought.*

1. *Equipment.* (1) The baptistery, if there be one, should be of proper dimensions, construction and location; provision should be made for warming the water. This is a matter for church-builders and not for plumbers or tinners. The errors of immersionists at this point are unnumbered and unjustifiable.

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*The writer of these lessons has had candidates express a desire to be baptized in running water. In all such instances he has promptly consented to go, even as far as the fords of the Jordan, provided necessary expenses were paid. He has gone to the creek often, as a concession to personal preference, but has yet to visit Palestine. Likewise, in case of the individual communion cups, he knows no reason why, if there be more than one, there may not as well be one hundred or five hundred; nor does he have any evidence that any harm has ever come from the use of one cup by many persons.

(2) The table and its furnishings should be suited to the service—simple, substantial and tasteful. To prepare the table should be made an act of devotion, even though the one doing it be paid for the service.

2. *The administrators.* Some men are gifted to perform public acts with fitness and good taste; others are not, but can fill some positions most efficiently. Having in mind the significance of these memorials, those whom their brethren think best qualified should be assigned to this work, and, having undertaken it, they should seek, by every available means, to qualify up to the last degree of efficiency attainable. Participants in the Bulgarian Passion Play make their parts a life study. Is not the showing of our Lord's death to the world of sufficient importance to receive equal attention at our hands? Masons go long distances and spend money to better equip themselves for lodge work, and often *the same men* are rusty and awkward in a public church service. The memorizing of suitable Scriptures, the careful preparation of appropriate words of thanksgiving, the patient study and working out of such an order and movement by those serving as will avoid friction or delay, are always necessary, but *so* seldom thought of. Those who urge the restoration of the New Testament ordinances should show their sincerity of purpose by showing due regard for their observance when restored.

3. *Accompaniments.* Music is an appropriate aid in all spiritual exercise, *provided it is appropriate music.* But what should attract the mind to the facts being celebrated is often so selected, so planned or so executed as to draw the minds of worshipers away from the one thing that is central. It is often assumed that, because an architect can build a livery stable or a chamber of commerce, he can erect a suitable house of worship and gospel workshop. Such an assumption, costly as it often proves, is harmless when compared with the more usual one, that a professor of vocal gymnastics is—of course—the suitable person to direct the musical portions of a religious service. "Let all things be done decently and in order," is the apostolic direction for the conduct of public worship, and in no way can we more surely bring reproach or breed indifference than by ignoring this injunction. Good judgment should guide in all our service.

This chapter is little more than a suggestive outline. Each class can gather such material and suggestion as may be needed to pack the recitation brimful of interest.

Subjects for Discussion

1. The value of religious observances.
2. The worth to Christians of the gospel observances as seen in use among the early disciples.
3. Are we justified in admitting the unimmersed to the communion table, at the same time refusing to enter their names on the congregational records?
4. Why can not a congregation elect to practice sprinkling instead of immersion?
5. Is baptism in an indoor pool Scriptural baptism?
6. For debate: "*Resolved*, That the common cup is preferable to the individual cup in a communion service."

LESSON XXXV. FINANCING THE ENTERPRISE

No undertaking will succeed unless it be adequately and wisely financed. Money is not all, by any means; of itself it will not guarantee success, but it is enough that failure here means failure all along the line.

The work committed to his disciples by Jesus Christ was, and still is, a tremendous undertaking. It requires plan, organization, ingenuity and enterprise of the first quality. In all of this it is not different from every other human endeavor.

The kingdom of God, though universal and spiritual, is manifested on earth by the church, which is limited and temporal, and, though dealing primarily with the souls of men, it necessarily involves their bodies and their possessions.

Next to lack of "religion pure and undefiled," more church failures are due to lack of financial sense than to any other cause. It will happen, sometimes, that a congregation will not have in its membership those who are capable of rightly directing its temporal affairs; more often, however, the defect is that competent financiers are ignored, and bunglers entrusted with these important matters. As well appoint Tuneless Tommy to lead the singing, or Legless Levi to pass the collection basket, as to leave the financial management of a congregation to men who have failed of success in their own business affairs. Strangely enough, too, we sometimes find men who, though alert and punctilious in their own interests, when set to attend to church business, "go to sleep on the job." The folly of all this must be realized, and the defects remedied, before the church can lay claim to the respect of sensible men in a world where only merit wins. It is the aim of this lesson to indicate a safe course for the managers of church finance. Good business men will recognize the wisdom of suggestions made, while the unexperienced man can regard them as guide-posts to prevent error and loss.

I. Financial Delusions to be Shunned.

1. *The "Salvation's Free" notion.* It is free so far as first cost to the needy is concerned, but disciples of Christ must bear the expense of transportation to others, or they are no disciples. The religion that never costs a cent is never worth a cent.

2. *The "Sponge Theory."* One could easily suppose, judging from money-raising schemes employed by many Christian bodies, that one principle of the religion of our Lord is that the elect share the benefits and the unregenerate pay the running expense. If a woman bakes a cake, using ingredients from the family supply, and sells it to another for fifty cents or a dollar, putting the proceeds into the Lord's treasury, it is nobody's business more than if a farmer raised a colt, sold it to his neighbor, and devoted the price to the work. But for Christian people to engage in these things *as a business run in behalf of the church*, thus coming into competition with those who conduct similar lines for a livelihood, buying and selling what they do not need, at fictitious values, and call it religious work—this is a farce, an injustice and a prostitution of the cause of Christ. There are two safe things

to do with this system; one is, not to begin it, and the other is, to stop it if already begun.

3. "*Frenzied Finance.*" There is a place for faith and enthusiasm in the work of the Lord. Some great religious enterprises have succeeded when begun under most unpromising circumstances. But careful financial management is as indispensable here as in the direction of a bank, and the principles of successful operation are the same in both cases. Many a deserted temple of worship and gilded spire are but melancholy monuments marking the ignominious end of a poorly conceived and badly managed enterprise. That such "wild-goose" projects are launched in the name of the Lord justifies them not one whit, and hurts the cause of religion always. The Lord can not bring success where his disciples lay foundations of failure, any more than he can remedy the acoustics of a room planned contrary to the laws of sound.

II. Financial Principles to be Respected.

1. *Let the financial responsibility be shared by all.* An injustice is done, in any case, when a Christian is relieved of doing his part. The church is a fellowship or partnership, and those who make investment most freely, receive most in dividends. Many a man who might otherwise grow careless, and drift from his moorings, has been saved to the cause by a judicious and careful finance committee.

2. *Let those in charge keep faith, and court the fullest and closest fellowship with the entire membership of the church.* The closed-circle plan may seem best and may operate well for a time, but it ends in failure. A careful statement of moneys to be raised, and the purposes for which they are to be used, should be made before the beginning of each fiscal year, and a detailed report of all contributions, receipts and expenditures should be published when the year closes. The members of a congregation have a right to know these things, and those who *serve in positions of leadership* can not justly withhold them.

3. *Let the managers of church finance do business for the Lord as they would for themselves; i. e.,*

(1) Consider the wisdom and feasibility of each project planned.

(2) Canvass resources, making reasonable allowances for possible failure or success at any point.

(3) Let faith be a factor counted at full value, and no more, just as it is in reckoning the income from a corn crop or an investment in property.

(4) Attend to all church business strictly "on the dot." It is important that each one do this; more so when several are co-operating than when one bears the whole responsibility.

III. Financial Plans to be Favored.

It has been the long-time principle among those who claim to be Christians only to seek for a "thus saith the Lord," or a Scripture precedent, for every religious doctrine or act. While the New Testament lays down no hard-and-fast system of finance, what it does say on the subject merits first consideration.

1. *The spirit to be inculcated.* "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20: 35); "more happy" is the exact meaning. Coupled with this should be the other saying, "God loveth a cheerful giver"

(2 Cor. 9: 7). The person whose spirit it is to give cheerfully for the good of others has found the open way to true blessedness or happiness. This applies, of course, to all giving, of time, of service, of comfort or of influence, but also and especially, because it is so often the real test, to the giving of money.

2. *The object to be held in view.* Read 2 Cor. 9: 6-15. The spiritual reaction gained from true giving is here reasoned out. "God is able to make all grace abound" in an individual or church that will go into partnership with him, but the niggardly and covetous even God can not help, for covetousness is idolatry—a choosing of other gods, and the "love of money is the *root* of all evil," pre-empting the ground and excluding the good things of the heavenly Father. It will be seen that the training of a congregation in this grace is vitally related to Christian culture and growth.

3. *The plan that works best.* "Now concerning the collection of the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come" (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2).

(1) Here is Scriptural precedent from the lips of an apostle. Paul does not give this instruction to the church in Corinth, as though he meant it to be the invariable rule for all churches everywhere, but a careful study of its briefly stated details will, we think, show it to be easily adaptable to any situation and eminently wise in its provisions.

(2) The plan had been tried in the churches of Galatia, an extended district, and was regarded by Paul as worthy of extension to other congregations.

(3) The requirements are easily met.

a. Giving shall be regular—"upon the first day of the week." This was the customary meeting-time (Acts 20: 7), and this would save trouble in making collections.

b. Giving shall be universal—"Let each one of you lay by him in store." The giving was to be individual, for a cause in which all were alike interested, and no exceptions were made. But, for convenience and for the gain of co-operation, the amounts given in a congregation were brought together when the disciples were met for worship.

c. Giving shall be proportionate—"as he may prosper." Any system that provides for one disciple to say what another shall give does not accord with the Scriptures, and, in the end, will work evil. Each one is to give "as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity." Each man knows how he is prospering, and whether or not he will honor God as God prospers him is left to his own conscience. This is in harmony with all other duties of man to God, and *it will work.*

4. *The greatest liberty is to be exercised in the operation of the plan.* Many helpful accessories are to be had:

(1) The weekly-envelope system has proved to be of greatest assistance. A bunch of fifty-two envelopes, bearing date and number, is provided for each member of the congregation, the offering being credited by the treasurer on a book suited to the purpose.

(2) Where the congregation has a missionary or benevolent fund, or funds, the duplex envelope, with two pockets, is found useful. By

its use a double offering may be made, and double credit received on the treasurer's book each week.

The weekly-offering system is by all odds the best plan of church finance. In some cases, as, for instance, in farming communities, it can not apply without exception and modification, for the chief supporters of the work do not receive their income regularly, but even there the plan is the best known, for payment can be made in any amount at any time, and the grace of giving is made a part of the Lord's Day worship.

The right conduct of the financial affairs of a congregation may justly be considered as an index to the life of the church. Just as the spirit of a man may be known by the appearance of his body, the care given it and the regard shown for it, so is the spirit of a congregation evident to the observing of the common temporalities that appear to all.

Subjects for Discussion

1. For what purposes may a congregation have need to provide a common fund?

2. Is the work of raising money by a church to be regarded as "secular" or in any way belittling?

3. Question for debate: "*Resolved*, That the church has forfeited the respect of business men by her methods of raising money for her work."

4. How far should a congregation be expected to care for its needy; and how may this best be done—by special provision or through "homes" and orphanages?

5. What is the relation of the financial to the spiritual life of a congregation?

6. Give reasons why the plan suggested in 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2 is desirable.

Test Questions and Answers

1. Wherein is the unity and harmony of the Scriptures remarkable?

1. It is the work of many minds, in widely separated lands, and at times remote from each other. It stands together as a symmetrical whole.

2. Considered as a book among books, how will the Bible impress the intelligent reader?

2. As a history, a literature and a revelation from the Supreme Being.

3. Of what does the Bible treat historically?

3. Of the creation, God's dealings with the chosen people and the plan of salvation.

4. As the literature of a separate people, what elements predominate in the Bible?

4. The historical, the didactical or teaching, and the devotional.

5. How does divine revelation proceed as seen in the Biblical record?

5. It is suited to the needs of the race from age to age, being primary at first, but progressive in principle, and finally perfect for the purposes in view.

6. By whom and when were the books of the Old Testament collected and arranged in their present form?

6. By Ezra the scribe, in 457 B. C.

7. How early in the Christian era were the New Testament writings assembled?

7. As early as the Council of Carthage—397—when a list of them was published.

8. By whom and at what date were chapter and verse divisions made?

8. Chapter divisions were made by Cardinal Hugo in 1250 A. D.; verse divisions three centuries later.

9. What three things should be noted carefully and continually in studying the Scriptures?

9. That the theme is continuous, that the arrangement of books is orderly and that the harmony of parts is remarkable.

10. Into what classes do the books of the Old Testament naturally fall?

10. The Law, 5 books; History, 12 books; Poetry, 5 books; Major Prophets, 5 books, and Minor Prophets, 12 books.

11. What are the natural divisions of the New Testament writings?

11. Biography, 4 books; History, 1 book; Special Letters, 14 books; General Letters, 7 books, and Revelation, 1 book.

12. Name the books of the Old Testament.

12. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

13. Name the books of the New Testament.

13. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude, Revelation.

14. What is the central theme of the Scriptures, Old Testament and New?

14. Jesus Christ, "who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:42, 43).

15. Wherein does the person of Jesus dominate the entire scene revealed by the Biblical records?

15. Its documents are saturated with evidences, intimations and revelations of a divinely conceived plan to save mankind from sin; its doctrines present Jesus Christ as the Son of God and central figure of the plan; its presentation of noble characters leaves him above them all and separate from them all—"The fairest among ten thousand."

16. How do we find the "beginning-point" in religious inquiry?

16. The Bible culminates in the New Testament; the New Testament reveals a single and simple creed; this creed has but one article of faith, and that article is a person—Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God—this is the beginning-point.

17. What was Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament?

17. He honored them as God's law, he referred to commands given by Moses as commands of God, and made the Scriptures his final source of appeal, declaring that they could not be broken.

18. How did Jesus make use of the Scriptures in his public teaching?

18. He answered the tempter by quoting them; he rebuked wrong-doers with them; he instructed his disciples with their precepts, and silenced objectors by appeal to them.

19. What service does the Law (of Moses) perform for us in this age?

19. It serves, Paul tells us, as a tutor or caretaker to bring us to Christ, of whom the way of life is learned (Gal. 3:23, 24).

20. How do the Christian Scriptures serve us?

20. They serve as a lens to reveal to us the person and teaching of the Saviour.

21. How may we illustrate the mischief done by those who weaken faith in the Bible?

21. They are as those who break the bottle that contains a precious medicine, or sever the thread that holds the strand of golden beads.

22. What is the final test of worth among men and things?

22. The test of utility, or what has been accomplished.

23. How has the Bible shown its worth to the world?

23. By its ability to withstand the opposition of evil influences, by its power to inspire mankind to do good, and by its influence in the uplift of the race.

24. How have the heathen religions been shown to be inferior to Christianity?

24. They are limited in their influence and extent by time, space, national boundaries and advancing knowledge, while Christianity flourishes alike in all ages, all lands and among all peoples of whatever state of culture.

25. Quote the testimony of three great men relative to the worth of the Bible.

25. Select any of the three cited in Lesson V.

26. Relate the story of Ling Ching Ting, or that of Lough Fook.

26. See Lesson V.

27. What is meant by Christian evidence?

27. Christian evidence is that line of religious investigation which deals with the fundamental facts of Christianity and the reasons for accepting it as a divinely revealed religion.

28. Why should every Christian make a careful study of Christian evidence?
28. So that he may be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason concerning the hope that is in him.

29. What is the beginning-point in Christian faith?
29. That "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

30. What is the best text-book on Christian evidence?
30. The Gospel according to John.

31. For what purpose was this record of our Lord's life prepared?
31. That we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we may have life in his name.

32. Is the faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, all that is necessary to salvation?
32. It is all that is needed *so far as faith is concerned*, but it must be true faith—"Faith without works is dead."

33. How do we determine as to this central truth of Christianity?
33. Just as we do as to any other important proposition, by weighing the evidence at hand and taking the position that most nearly harmonizes with the facts as we know them.

34. What four lines of evidence are indicated in the first chapter of John's narrative?
34. The testimony of the physical senses, the testimony of reputable and competent witnesses, the testimony of authentic records and the testimony of consciousness.

35. How many of these are accessible to us to-day?
35. All save the testimony of the physical senses.

36. What eye-witnesses testify to us of the personality of Jesus?
36. Matthew, John and Paul.

37. What authentic records have we that bear testimony of Christ?
37. The various writings of the Old and New Testaments and the subsequent history of Christianity.

38. For whom, and of what value, is the testimony of consciousness?
38. It is for Christians, and is the confirmation that comes of actively serving Christ.

39. How many disciples did our Lord choose to be with him constantly and become witnesses for him?
39. Twelve.

40. Of these, how many were chosen to be present on occasions of particular importance?
40. Three.

41. Name these special witnesses.
41. Peter, James and John.

42. Name three important occasions when he took these with him.
42. The transfiguration, raising of Jairus' daughter and the agony in the garden.

43. What positions did they occupy in the early church?
43. Peter held "the keys of the kingdom," being first to preach the completed gospel; James held the position of highest influence in the church at Jerusalem, and John honored Christ by long life, faithful service and the writing of five of the New Testament books.

44. Were there other witnesses than the twelve?
44. Doubtless many more. Paul reminded Agrippa that "this hath not been done in a corner," and speaks in another place (1 Cor. 15:6) of our risen Lord being seen of "above five hundred at once."

45. How may the testimony of the apostles be considered?
45. As falling into three divisions—the public oral testimony to the people of Palestine, the special testimony to Gentile peoples of other lands and the written testimony for all lands and ages.

46. Who gave public oral testimony to the Jews?
46. The twelve apostles.

47. Who gave special testimony to the Gentiles?
47. Several of the apostles, but Paul in particular as one chosen for this purpose.

48. What special qualification had Paul for his work of witnessing for Christ among the Gentiles?

48. He saw Jesus face to face on the road to Damascus, and heard him say, "Rise and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the peoples and from the Gentiles unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." (Let this passage be carefully learned; it is important.)

49. What was Paul's program?

49. To testify wherever he went, first to Jews and then to Gentiles, and to go to the uttermost parts of the known world preaching the gospel.

50. What ones of the apostolic group left written testimony?

50. Matthew, James, Peter, John and Paul.

51. What said John Adams of the Bible?

51. "The Bible is the best book in the world."

52. What said Queen Victoria?

52. "This book is the secret of England's greatness."

53. What said Andrew Jackson?

53. "That book, sir, is the rock on which our republic rests."

54. On what did the faith of the apostles rest?

54. On facts about a person.

55. On what does our faith rest?

55. On these same facts, as attested by faithful men chosen for that purpose.

56. Give a synopsis of the New Testament writings.

56. The gospel revealed, in the four Gospels, the gospel proclaimed, in the Acts, the gospel at work, in the Epistles, the gospel victorious, in Revelation.

57. Can consciousness be made a guide in matters of faith and life?

57. No, for each man's consciousness is dependent upon his knowledge and experience, so that each one would have a different guide.

58. Of what assistance, then, is the testimony of consciousness?

58. It transforms faith into knowledge, it strengthens disciples in trial and it inspires to service.

59. How may the prophecies concerning Christ be classified?

59. In three groups—general, specific and personal.

60. What is the nature of the general prophecies?

60. They are veiled, or figurative, references, not fully understood when uttered, but accurately fulfilled by our Lord's life.

61. Name some figures under which the "coming One" is presented.

61. The Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Prophet like unto Moses, the Righteous Branch and the Suffering Servant.

62. What is the nature of the specific prophecies?

62. They go more into the details of his advent and his life.

63. What details of his life are foretold in the Old Testament?

63. His virgin parentage, the place of his birth, the visit of wise men, the slaughter of innocents, his forerunner, his manner of teaching, his betrayal, details of the crucifixion, the resurrection and the going forth of his word from Jerusalem.

64. What is meant by personal prophecies?

64. They are prophetic utterances from his own lips and from those of his apostles.

65. Give some instances of personal prophecies.

65. He foretold his death and resurrection, he referred to the violence that would destroy his own body, he described the destruction of Jerusalem, and the apostles foretold the "falling away" that came in the Dark Ages, and John received a revelation on the island of Patmos which he recorded for the benefit of others.

66. What is the relation of Christ to the church?

66. Christ is represented in the Scriptures as the Head of the church.

67. What does the leadership of Christ over the church imply?

67. Authority to command, wisdom to direct and love to protect.

68. What authority is there for assigning to Christ headship in the church?

68. He claimed it for himself; his apostles so taught and the Scriptures so recognize it.

69. Quote one passage of Scripture that proves that Christ is head of the church.

69. Eph. 1:22, 23: "And he [God] put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

70. What, then, of the claims of those reputed to be "head of the church"?

70. They are the false claims of those who would usurp the authority of the Son of God.

71. Christ being the head over all things to the church, what are the consequent obligations of members?

71. To be in constant communication with the head, to show due honor by prompt obedience and to labor with due regard for the welfare of other members of the body.

72. What plans have been devised to establish a seat of authority in the church?

72. The papal, the episcopal and the democratic.

73. What is the theory of each?

73. Of the papal, "The voice of the pope is the voice of God;" of the episcopal, "The voice of the bishops is the voice of God," and of the democratic, "The voice of the people is the voice of God."

74. How may the true plan be designated?

74. The New Testament plan was that Christ-governed men, acting under divine direction, should be in authority.

75. To what source should those in authority go for divine direction?

75. In our Lord's day, to him; in the succeeding age, to the apostles; in our day, to his word and theirs as recorded in the New Testament.

76. What limitations are thrown round the church?

76. She can not change the faith, the form of government or the standard of righteousness set by our Lord and the apostles.

77. What liberties are left to the church?

77. The control of her temporal affairs, the choice of those who are to be in authority, direction of unprescribed details of worship, the method of carrying out the Lord's commands and the privilege of self-defense against false teachers.

78. What precaution is always necessary on the part of those set to lead?

78. To so conduct all matters as to avoid occasion or opportunity for discord, dissension or division.

79. What principles, if guarded, will preserve the unity and harmony of the church?

79. Oneness of purpose, unity of action, harmony of parts.

80. What emphasis is placed on unity and harmony by the Scriptures?

80. It is taught by Christ, emphasized and reiterated by the apostles and exemplified by the early church.

81. Quote words of our Lord indicating his desire that his disciples be united.

81. John 17:20, 21: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me."

82. Quote from an apostle words counseling harmony.

82. Phil. 2:2, 3: "Make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; *doing* nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself."

83. Give some reasons why Christians should be formed into congregations.

83. To keep the memorial he appointed, to conduct the service of teaching, to share the partnership of Christian service, to be edified and to edify others in the worship of God.

84. Name the important duties of a Christian congregation.

84. To preach the gospel, to maintain the ordinances that testify of Christ and to invite others to Christ.

85. What are the most common dangers of a newly formed congregation?

85. Discouragement, dissension and division.

86. What difficulties will usually have to be met?

86. The need of trained workers, the harmonizing of diverse elements, the care of the weak and wayward and the financing of the work.

87. Is it necessary that a church, to grow and prosper, be provided with a "regular preacher"?

87. It is necessary that disciples have air, food and exercise, but the Bible does not prescribe the means by which these should be secured. The elders should be "apt to teach," and if, in addition, a preacher of the Word can be had, it is well, but the constitution of the church does not require it.

88. What is the purpose of organization?

88. To so place each part that it will work to best advantage and to so form and direct the whole body as to best accomplish the end in view.

89. Why should disciples of our Lord organize for work?

89. The task in hand is important, the resources are variable; it is dependent upon volunteers whose varied services, to be effective, must be combined.

90. What is accomplished by wise organization?

90. The Lord's work is carried on, each disciple having a part, and each one doing the thing for which he is best suited.

91. When is organization needed?

91. When there is a task to do, a force to be organized and a will to work.

92. What Scriptural provision is made for division of the essential work of a congregation?

92. Bishops or elders shall be appointed to teach or "feed the flock" of God, and deacons or servants chosen to attend to material matters.

93. What further organization is permissible?

93. Such as the work may require, so long as it in no way hinders or infringes upon that prescribed in the Scriptures, or contravenes anything in the constitution of the church.

94. Name the three periods under which the beginnings of the church may be grouped?

94. The beginning at Jerusalem, the church at Antioch and the entering of Macedonia.

95. Name five incidents in the development of the Jewish church.

95. Provision for the destitute, selection of "servants" for special work, persecution of disciples, extension of the gospel to Samaritans and the conversion of Saul.

96. What steps toward enlargement accompanied the formation of the first Gentile church at Antioch?

96. The adoption of a new name, the launching of the missionary enterprise and the declaration of freedom from Jewish rites and ceremonies.

97. What is the significance of Paul's entering Macedonia?

97. It was accompanied by a special vision; it was the beginning of Paul's mission to the Gentiles, and it marked Christianity as a world religion.

98. Name five important European cities where Paul preached.

98. Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth.

99. Give five important dates in New Testament history.

99. The beginning at Jerusalem, A. D. 30. Conversion of Paul, A. D. 36. First Gentile church, A. D. 38-41. First missionary journey, A. D. 49. Death of Paul, A. D. 66 or 70.

100. From what natural cause did the persecutions of the early church arise?

100. From contact with long-established religious systems and deep-seated national and racial prejudices.

101. Was anything gained for the gospel by these strenuous oppositions?

101. Though reduced in numbers, the church was strengthened by what she resisted, hence a new growth resulted.

102. Under what three classifications are the persecutions of the early church studied?

102. Jewish, pagan and subsequent persecutions.

103. What three periods of persecution are designated by Samuel Edgar as covering all church history?

103. The world opposing the church from without. Temporal power in the church opposing true gospel. The apostate church opposing the reformation.

104. What is meant by the "Dark Ages," as referred to in history?

104. A long period of spiritual decline, which followed the elevation of the Emperor of Rome to the headship of the church, approximately from 400 to 1400 A. D.

105. What significance has this period in religious history?

105. It was foretold by the apostles; its influence corrupted all fundamental doctrines of the gospel and supplanted the simple organization of the early church with a hierarchy purely human and worldly.

106. When and by whom was the scheme of apostolic succession adopted?

106. In 460 A. D., by Leo II.

107. When and by whom was the title "Lord of the whole church" bestowed on the Bishop of Rome?

107. In 533, by Emperor Justinian.

108. Name five doctrinal perversions of the Dark Ages.

108. The name "Holy Roman Catholic Church" was adopted, the ordinances of Christ were perverted in form and meaning, the intercession of priests was placed between the believer and God, purgatory was invented as a means of income and good works substituted for faith in Christ.

109. What was the Reformation?

109. A period of one hundred years, approximately from 1400 to 1500, during which heroic and godly men were seeking to reform the apostate church on Scriptural lines.

110. Name seven great reformers in the order of their work.

110. John Wycliff, John Huss, Girolamo Savonarola, Martin Luther, John Knox, John Calvin and John Wesley.

111 Name four steps or epochs of religious reform as recorded in history.

111. The word of God discovered and restored by Luther, the authority of God proclaimed by Calvin, the indwelling of God taught by Wesley and the place of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, set forth by Campbell.

112. What final steps remained when the seven reformers named had finished their work?

112. Restoration or the adoption of the divinely revealed standards of faith and life found in the New Testament.

113. How did the Restoration movement come about?

113. It arose simultaneously in many parts of the world, being characterized by a desire to unite God's people and a renewed quest for the paths of Scripture.

114. What did it propose?

114. The restoration of primitive Christianity, its doctrines, its ordinances and its fruits.

115. How was this to be accomplished?

115. By strict adherence to the rule, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

116. What resulted from the application of this rule?

116. The discovery of a platform on which all followers of Christ could unite.

117. Name four peculiarities that distinguish the Restoration movement from all religious reformations.

117. It is distinctly American in origin, it offers no new doctrine, its mission is mainly to Christian bodies, and it proposes not to reform that which is wrong, but to restore that which has been lost.

118. What success has attended the movement?

118. Its adherents number over a million and a quarter.

119. What are some basic principles of the Restoration movement?

119. The authority of the Scriptures, the pre-eminence of Christ and an intelligent view of the work of the Holy Spirit in culture and conversion.

120. What was held concerning the Bible?

120. That the Old Testament was for the Jewish dispensation and the New for the Christian.

121. What concerning the church?

121. That it began on the day of Pentecost after our Lord's ascension.

122. What concerning conversion?

122. That God makes appeal to the nature of man by intelligible means, and that conversion is man's acceptance of God's terms of pardon.

123. What should be our model when studying the Christian enterprise?

123. The church of the New Testament as set forth by Jesus Christ and his apostles.

124. What was the plan of our Lord's personal ministry?

124. To heal, teach and preach.

125. What plan did the apostles follow in their work?

125. The same as had been followed by their Master.

126. What was the plan of the disciples in the early church?

126. Substantially the same—deacons attended to things temporal, elders were ordained to teach and evangelists to preach.

127. What reason can be given for the adoption of this manner of approach to the work of saving men?

127. It ministers to the whole man, physical, intellectual and spiritual.

128. What importance attaches to the matter of leadership in the Christian enterprise?

128. As in other endeavors, it is of utmost importance.

129. To whom does leadership fall by nature?

129. To man.

130. What qualifications mark man for leadership?

130. His superior physical strength, his excess of brain capacity over woman and the dominance of the will over the emotional in his temperament.

131. What evidence is there that man is to lead in religious work?

132. What is it to train for Christian leadership?

133. Why should the church endeavor to have a trained membership?

134. Give some reasons why disciples should be trained.

135. Give Scriptural examples of special training for service.

136. What is there in church work to warrant the expenditure of time and effort necessary to proper equipment?

137. What is the real purpose that should actuate the church in all of her activities?

138. By what means may this purpose be accomplished?

139. What liberties and privileges are exercised by individual Christians in the New Testament?

140. What new responsibilities come with the grouping of individual Christians in congregations?

141. Give Scriptural precedent for the co-operation of disciples and groups of disciples in doing the Lord's work?

142. What limitation must be set for all combinations of disciples or churches?

143. What are the forms most commonly assumed by co-operative Christian work?

144. What provision did Jesus make for the extension of his work in the world?

145. What may be said of present forms of organized missionary and benevolent work?

146. Name some agencies for the ministry of healing employed by those who are Christians only.

147. By what means is the work of teaching carried on?

131. He was appointed to leadership in the earlier revealed religions, the prophets were nearly all men, and all the more important duties of the primitive church were placed in the hands of men.

132. It is to so draw out and exercise the native faculties as to make the individual of greatest service in the church.

133. Because training is required in every avenue of life and Christian work deserves the best service that can be rendered.

134. The members need it, the importance of the task in hand demands it and the delicacy of the work requires it.

135. In the Old Testament, Abraham, Moses, Samuel and David; in the New Testament, the twelve apostles, three special witnesses and Peter and Paul.

136. The preaching of the gospel to all nations is the most important duty ever assigned to man.

137. The carrying out of the plans laid by Jesus Christ, her head.

138. By individual effort, by the combination of individual efforts and by the association of groups of Christians.

139. Any Christian may heal, teach, preach and make disciples so far as he is able.

140. The responsibility of assigning to each disciple what he can best do, of properly transacting such business as is of common interest and of so conducting the teaching service as that each disciple will receive proper instruction and training.

141. The church at Antioch sent out missionaries, congregations aided in the support of the apostle Paul and the churches in Galatia combined their gifts for the relief of needy brethren in Judea.

142. The independence of the local congregation and the liberty of the individual disciple must be carefully guarded.

143. Hospitals and dispensaries for healing, schools for teaching and corporations formed to promote evangelistic effort.

144. He committed it to the hands of faithful men, leaving the matter of method to them and those who should follow.

145. They are but plans, agencies or tools by which we find it convenient to work at the present time. They may be modified or discarded as wisdom may suggest.

146. Hospitals, homes for the helpless and provision for the care of aged preachers.

147. The Christian home, Bible schools, the Christian college, mission schools and the religious newspaper.

148. What provision is made by our organized agencies for preaching the gospel?

148. This is the central obligation of each agency. The Foreign Christian Missionary Society and the American Christian Missionary Society, of Cincinnati; the C. W. B. M., of Indianapolis, and the State and district societies give this work the chief place, while the Board of Church Extension, the Board of Ministerial Relief, and the National Christian Benevolent Association do work auxiliary to this one great end.

149. Do present organizations fully occupy the field of Christian endeavor?

149. They do not; each one has its place and does its work, asking and receiving such support as it can obtain, but the field is open for wisely planned individual or independent work and for any and all agencies that may be found to serve the cause profitably.

150. In what particular is the church of Christ unlike every earthly establishment?

150. It is based on service, and its founder made himself a servant for the sake of others.

151. In what one endeavor may the disciples of Jesus seek to excel each other and to have pre-eminence?

151. In the endeavor to render service to others in the name of Christ.

152. Give the usual and the true significance of the title "minister."

152. The usual, a church dignitary who performs religious ceremonies; the true, one who serves—literally, a slave.

153. What is the relation of service to discipleship?

153. Service is a condition of discipleship—the kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of servants with the Servant of all as their King.

154. Give the order of the New Testament ministry?

154. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds (or teachers) and deacons.

155. Who were the apostles and what was their particular work?

155. The apostles were men chosen, specially qualified and sent out by Christ to preach his Word and to bear witness for him to all men.

156. Who were the prophets?

156. The prophets of the New Testament times were men and women endowed with the gift of foretelling future events.

157. Do we have apostles and prophets in the churches to-day?

157. We do not; these special gifts belonged to the age of supernormal manifestation.

158. What was the office and work of evangelists?

158. Evangelists were men set apart for the special work of preaching the Word.

159. What was the work of those servants known as shepherds and teachers?

159. They were men in each congregation chosen to have care and oversight, as of a flock.

160. In what capacity did deacons serve?

160. The deacons were "servants" of the congregation in material things.

161. By what authority did the apostles speak when dealing with religious truth?

161. The apostles, when teaching, spoke by the authority of Jesus Christ.

162. Cite a passage of Scripture which proves this?

162. "But the Comforter, *even* the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14:26).

163. What were their advantages in preparing for their work?

163. Three years of special training by our Lord in person, authority to represent him on earth and a special endowment of the Holy Spirit.

164. What was the specific work of the apostles?

164. They were to bear witness to the central facts of Christ's life, to receive and impart additional truth and to be ambassadors, or commissioners, for Christ in the early church.

165. Name the twelve apostles.

165. Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the Less, Thaddeus, Simon, Judas.

166. What position or office in the New Testament church is of chief importance?

166. The eldership.

167. Why is the eldership of such importance?

167. Because elders have charge of the teaching service of the church.

168. What other obligations adhere to this office?

168. The protection of the "flock," the direction of disciplinary measures, the care of the weak and needy and the administration of the ordinances.

169. By what names are these guardians of the church known in Scripture?

169. Elders, bishops and shepherds.

170. How many distinct qualifications are named as necessary to the ideal elder?

170. Twenty.

171. Name the qualifications of an elder as enumerated by Paul?

171. Without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach, no brawler, no striker, gentle, not contentious, no lover of money, one that ruleth well his own house, not a novice, having good testimony from them that are without, having children that believe, not soon angry, a lover of good, just, holy.

172. What word of approval does Paul speak concerning the office of elder?

172. "If a man seeketh the office of bishop he desireth a good work" (1 Tim. 3:1).

173. What is the meaning of the term "deacon"?

173. The word "deacon" means servant or slave.

174. How did the appointment of deacons come about in the early church?

174. There was need of assistance in administering the affairs of the church and they were selected and appointed to certain temporal duties.

175. What, then, would seem to be the work of these servants?

175. To minister in material things as the elders do in spiritual.

176. What word of approval does Paul speak for the faithful deacon?

176. "They that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 3:13).

177. Indicate some of the duties that belong to deacons?

177. Property interests, material ministries to sick and destitute and financial matters.

178. What relation of our Lord and his followers is most frequently suggested by the designations used in the Gospel records?

178. That of teacher and disciple.

179. What is the first obligation of a disciple of Jesus?

179. To become thoroughly acquainted with the teachings of the Master.

180. What further duty results when the Master's teachings are well learned?

180. The teachings should be exemplified in conduct.

181. What is the final and continual obligation of every disciple?

181. To bring others to Christ that they, too, may be "discipled," or taught by him.

182. What place is assigned to *action*, both in Scripture and psychology?

182. The central place: entrance into the kingdom of Christ, remission of sins, the strengthening of faith and the building of character all depend upon *action*.

183. Give a brief statement of the duty of a disciple?

183. To learn the gospel, to live the gospel and to bear the gospel to others.

184. What is the most important work assigned to disciples?

184. The imparting of gospel truth to others.

185. To whom was this duty first entrusted?

185. To the twelve disciples whom he had chosen as apostles.

186. To whom was it committed by them?

186. To evangelists and teachers selected with care and ordained or set apart to the sacred work of teaching.

187. What provision was made for the spread of the truth concerning Christ?

187. Any qualified disciple could teach, the elders or bishops of each congregation were to be men who are "apt to teach," and, in addition, evangelists were ordained and sent out, whose one work was to preach the Word and set in order the congregations.

188. What provision is made for "pastors" to have oversight and direction of congregations?

188. The elders of a congregation are its pastors or shepherds; the modern "pastor" of a church is a functionary unknown in the New Testament.

189. Is there, then, any Scriptural warrant for a preacher of the Word giving all his time to one community under the direction of one church?

189. There is; Paul, Timothy, Titus and others labored continuously for considerable periods in certain localities; but such an one is in no sense a pastor, but an evangelist, laboring under the direction of the pastors or elders of the church.

190. What may be expected of the evangelist or teacher who labors in word and teaching?

190. That he be a good man and that his message conform in every way to the teachings of the Christian Scriptures.

191. What may the preacher or evangelist expect of the disciples with whom he labors?

191. That they "behave themselves as becometh saints," that they show due regard for him who ministers in spiritual things, rendering him adequate support in material things, and that they conduct the practical ministries of the gospel to the sick and unfortunate.

192. By what figure is the relation of the leaders and the congregation most fitly set forth?

192. Under the figure of "undershepherds" having charge of a flock with Christ as "chief Shepherd."

193. As shepherds, what service must elders render to the flock?

193. They must provide food, shelter and safety from enemies.

194. In what spirit or manner should elders perform their work?

194. "Not of constraint," "Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind," and not as "lording it over the charge."

195. Does the New Testament indicate the method by which the elders shall proceed with their work?

195. It does not; it specifies the work and indicates the kind of man needed to do it, but leaves the matter of method open.

196. Are elders to "feed the flock" personally—that is, do the public teaching?

196. Yes, they *may* do so, provided they can render effective and acceptable service; if not, they may call an evangelist to their aid.

197. Is it essential that elders know the teaching of the Scriptures?

197. They must, else how shall they be able to teach, select a teacher or protect the congregation from false teachers?

198. What provision is made for such disciples as transgress the law of Christ?

198. They are to be sought as straying sheep and brought back to the fold if possible.

199. Upon whom does this responsibility rest?

199. Upon the elders of the congregation.

200. Does the New Testament offer a plan of procedure in cases of difference between brethren?

200. It does; in Matt. 18:15-17.

201. What is it, in brief?

201. "Go show him his fault between him and thee alone;" if he will not hear, "take with thee one or two more;" if he still refuse, "tell it to the church;" and if he will not hear the church, "let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican."

202. Is there authority for withdrawing from one who insists on walking disorderly?

202. There is; in 1 Cor. 5:1-13.

203. What was the nature of the sin there referred to?

203. The offense was an infamous one; it had become an open scandal; the offender was bold and impenitent and the cause of our Lord was in reproach because of it.

204. How many ordinances were observed by the early church?

204. Two—baptism and the Lord's Supper.

205. From what source were they received?

205. From Christ, and they are therefore ordinances of Christ and not ordinances of the church.

206. What is the significance of Christian baptism?

206. It is observed by command of the Saviour; it symbolizes the great fact of his resurrection and marks the beginning of the new life.

207. What is the significance of the Lord's Supper?

207. It is a communion with Christ, a place of self-adjustment, a testimony to the world and a monument celebrating the sufferings of the Saviour in our behalf.

208. Quote a passage of Scripture showing the practice of the church as to the communion in apostolic days.

208. "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).

209. What should be kept in mind as desirable by those who administer the ordinances?

209. Simplicity, dispatch and edification.

210. What are some delusions to be met and overcome by those who have to do with church finance?

210. The "Salvation's free" idea, the "Sponge theory" and the "Frenzied finance" delusion.

211. Give a safe plan of procedure for those who have this matter in charge.

211. Let the "fellowship" be shared by all, keep faith with the congregation in fullest measure, court publicity and do business for the Lord as for self—thoroughly and carefully.

212. What plan of finance is most successful?

212. The Scriptural plan—1 Cor. 16:2: "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper."

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